

THE HEALING MINISTRY:
A CHALLENGE OF THE AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES
TO THE TRADITIONAL (WESTERN PARENTED) CHURCHES

A Professional Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Theology
at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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This professional project, completed by

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of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

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The exercise on this page is more than protocol.

I therefore write to say that I have been greatly privileged to have been able to undertake this project.

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Benjamin Ọládẹ̀indé Ọmọ́sebi

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To Papa and Mama

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Problem Addressed by the Project	1
Importance of the Problem	1
Importance of the Undertaking	1
Biblical Teaching on Healing in the Church	2
Jesus Christ's Example	3
Healing in the Early Church	3
Importance to Professional Leadership in the Church	4
Thesis	4
Definition of Major Terms	5
Healing	5
Ministry	5
Churches	5
African Independent Churches	5
Traditional or Western-Parented Churches	5
Anglican Churches	5
Scope and Limitations	6
Work Previously Done in the Field	7
Eye-Witness Account	7
Primary Sources	7
Secondary Sources	9
Procedure for Integration	10
Chapter Outline	10
II. CHRISTIAN MISSIONS	13
Nigeria	13
The Country	13
The People	15
Culture and Tradition	16
Religions	18
Christian Missions	21
The Establishment of Christianity	21
Characteristics of a Traditional (Western- Parented) Church	29
The Contribution of Education and Medicine	33
Missionary Strategy	37
The Missionaries and the New Field	38
Summary	43

III. THE ART OF HEALING IN NIGERIAN TRADITIONAL CULTURE	51
The Concept of Healing and Wholeness to the Nigerian	51
Origins of Sickness or Illness	51
Physical	52
Psychical	53
"Pneumatic" (Spiritual)	55
Agents of Healing (Practitioners)	57
Medicine-Man (Oníṣẹ̀gùn=Yoruba)	58
Diviner (Babaláwo = Yoruba) and Medium	59
Priest (Olórìṣà = Yoruba)	62
Procedures for Healing	64
Sacrifices	64
Types of Sacrifices	67
Prayers	69
Purposes of Prayer	73
Other Forms of Healing	81
Group and Family Therapy	81
Counseling	82
Preparation of Herbs and Other Medicines	83
The Main Weakness of the Traditional Mode of Healing	85
Summary	86
IV. THE AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES	96
What are These Churches	96
Definition	96
General Description	97
Others	101
Origins	102
The First Independent Churches	102
The Braid Movement	104
The Aladura Movement	106
Beliefs and Practices (Characteristics)	115
The Bible: The Inspired Word of God	115
"Rolled Away": The Doctrine of Justification (Idalare = Yoruba)	115
Showers of Blessing: The Doctrine of the Spirit	117
Healing By Prayers and The Doctrine of Miracles	123
Ethics	124
Other Characteristics	128
Summary	137

V. STRATEGIES FOR THE TRADITIONAL CHURCHES FOR THE HEALING MINISTRY	.146
Prayerfulness	.147
The Proper Attitude	.147
Humility	.147
Willingness to Learn	.148
Sympathy and Patience	.148
Openness	.149
Education	.150
"Do Not Quench the Spirit": Attitude to Various Interested Church Members	.155
Mutual Understanding	.157
Contextualisation and Indigenisation	.158
Liturgy	.160
Study and Encourage Cultural Festivals	.165
Dress	.168
Stewardship	.170
Act Now!	.171
Try	.171
Introduce Regular Healing Services	.172
Summary	.173
VI. THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE	.180
The Future	.180
Dialogue	.181
Mutual Relationship	.182
Ministerial Training and Educational Opportunities	.186
Christian Councils	.187
Issues for Further Research	.188
Towards a Theology for Africa	.188
Theological Training	.191
Church History	.198
Lectures, Symposia, Debates on Theological Issues	.201
Further Research in Other Aspects of the Churches' Life	.204
Summary	.207

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	.213
Summary	.213
The Problem Restated	.213
Summary of Chapters II-VI	.214
Conclusion	.215
BIBLIOGRAPHY	.219

ABSTRACT

An ecclesiologist and probably any other observer in Nigeria and Africa does not need to go too far before being struck by the incredible popularity and attraction the African Independent Churches are providing the populace.

Part of the preoccupation of this project has been the study and the identification of the sources and reasons for the popularity of these churches, especially why the Traditional (European and Western Parented) churches of which the writer is a priest painfully and probably, carelessly continue to lose its members to the former.

One of the results of the inquiry is that the Traditional Churches have not been able to make themselves a place to feel at home to the people they exist to serve. The Traditional Churches in Nigeria, this project declares have neglected that important and significant aspect of their ministry--the healing ministry--to the men and women, old and young who owing to their cultural and traditional background could have appreciated the service in immeasurable and invaluable ways.

The writer has endeavoured to suggest avenues through which the anormally could be ameliorated by means of strategizing and a due consideration of the present and the future state of the Church in Nigeria.

The procedure of this study included field visits to the African Independent and the Traditional Churches, interviews; drawing from my professional experience and resources as a priest of the Anglican

Church. This knowledge has been interacted with documented materials reflecting studies previously undertaken on the subject of healing.

My studies reveal that the healing ministry in the Church is the business of all Christians, lay or clergy, and that there is a sense in which members care for each others and also a sense in which the people of God do acknowledge and are willing to take up the responsibility of this particular function of the Church. Considering the cultural and traditional contexts in which the Church exists in Nigeria,--a place with a popular belief in spirits and the supernatural--the African Independent Churches have actually emerged as a model of the healing ministry.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PROBLEM ADDRESSED BY THE PROJECT

The problem addressed in this project is the little attention accorded the ministry of healing in the Traditional (Western Parented) churches.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Importance of the Undertaking.

The importance of this undertaking lies in the attempt to dispel and refute unwholesome beliefs, myths, assumptions and understandings that the ministry of healing in the Church of Christ in Africa, for example in Nigeria is, and should only be the sole concern and monopoly of a selected number of churches, while the others are left to take care of some other aspect of the life and ministry of the church and consequently (the latter) depriving themselves and their members, the experience and benefits available in that essential aspect of ministry.

Bishop B.G.M. Sundkler in his book, Bantu Prophets in South Africa, expresses what I consider an inappropriate opinion. He says:

While the Roman Church is an Institute of Grace through its Sacraments, and the Protestant Church in Africa appears as an Institute of the Word through teaching and preaching, the Independent Church, Zionist type, is an Institute of Healing.¹

While I strongly question this sharp, misleading distinction and demarcation, I however agree with the missionary when he said that "The

healing message (of the Gospel) is the pivot of all Church activity."² Yes, the healing ministry with all its attendant benefits is indeed not a Zionist discovery.³ The healing ministry and message is an essential feature of the Gospel of Christ.

Biblical Teaching on Healing in the Church.

Healing and miracles, according to the New Testament and the entire Bible, are practical and visible demonstration of the presence of God;⁴ the advent of his kingdom with power manifest particularly in forgiveness (Mk 2:1-12).⁵ Jesus Christ did not only proclaim the good news of the kingdom but also in practical and concrete terms (especially in his exorcisms) demonstrated the evidence that God's power and promises were being fulfilled. Hence Christ's preaching was attended by signs, enabling men and women not only to hear God's word but also to see its effectual power in the world (Matt 11:4-5). John's Gospel records Jesus as saying that: "unless you see signs and wonders [that is acts of healing and miracles] you will not believe." (Jn 4:4-8). By this, he means that such acts of healing are themselves important and significant to the life of the Christian Church because they can serve as means to the end, and ultimately contributing and promoting the Kingdom of God. For apart from the fact that such exercises aid the communication and reception of the word of God they invariably enhance the conversion of new believers who after being fascinated by a new phenomenon would be won over to the performer's teaching and community (the Church).⁶

The healing ministry, then--whether healing through prayer, medicine, pastoral counseling, group therapy, nutrition and mental health services, rehabilitation from drug addiction, or social

reconciliation and the defense of human rights, in whatever form--is not merely a secondary social service of the church but also an inseparable part of the announcement of the goods news of the Kingdom of life revealed in Jesus Christ.⁷

Jesus Christ's Example.

Jesus, the Head of the Church, came to the world to do the will of God who sent Him. No wonder then that when He "saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them and healed their sick." (Mt 14:14) At the evening time all those who were sick that were brought to Him were healed (Mk 1:32). When he commissioned His disciples, this assignment always involved "preaching and healing." (Lk 9:1-2; 10:1,9) By his example Christ taught his disciples that his mission on earth, included healing of the sick, of the blind, the deaf and all other sorts of ailments. Jesus was among his disciples as one who serves; (Lk 22:27) and so the universal church of Christ and not a section of the church must in the footsteps of her Lord, be in the community and in the world as one who serves. The service obviously should include the ministry of healing which Christ wills that his church continues after his death (Mt 10:1).

The ministry and therefore the witness of the community is also essentially and in all forms and circumstances...evangelical address, i.e. proclamation and explication in the form of application. For this reason it cannot achieve its declaration and explanation in a vacuum. For it does not itself live in a vacuum. In every age and situation it stands in definite relations to the world around i.e. non-Christians who like its own members are above all living men who have in some way gone astray and are therefore under assault.⁸

Healing in the Early Church.

Consequently, in the early Church, the restoration of the sick

(healing) became an essential concomitant of subsequent apostolic practice, in conformity with the expressed will of Christ. In the days immediately after Pentecost many healing events occurred through the apostles, and we know that the pathology dealt with was varied as that which had confronted Jesus, during his earthly ministry.

Now many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them but the people held them in high honour. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord multitudes, both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter [an apostle] came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. (Acts 5:12-16)

Importance to Professional Leadership in the Church.

Professional leadership in the Church similarly implies that all people and prospective leaders acknowledge the indispensability of spiritual gifts including those of healing and working of miracles. St. Paul, the great apostle of the Gentile mission wrote:

. . . I was not at all inferior to these superlative apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs [distinguishing marks] of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. (2 Cor 12:1-12)

THESIS

The thesis of this project is that the healing ministry in the Church of Christ, particularly in Nigeria, should be the active and regular concern of all who profess and call themselves members of the "One and indivisible Body"--the Church--and not just a prerogative of the few.

DEFINITION OF MAJOR TERMS

Healing:

The curing or the restoration to health of a sick person, whether by promoting the closure of wounds, repairing the results of accidents or surgical disease or administering effective treatment for specific pathological conditions of the body or mind. In the context of this project healing will include dealing with grief, troubles, harm or other undesirable conditions.

Ministry:

This is the act of ministering or serving. It is from the word "minister" which in Hebrew is translated "to work"; "to serve"; "to attend to the needs."

Churches:

Plural of Church which could be defined as "the community of the people of God"; also, the spiritual family of God, or the Christian fellowship created by the Holy Spirit through the testimony to the mighty acts of God in Christ Jesus.

African Independent Churches:

Churches though emerging out of the parent body which in most instances are the Traditional (or the Western oriented) Churches started in Africa as indigenous churches and were founded, organized and administered by indigenous persons.

Traditional or Western Parented Churches:

Churches which originating and having their organizational center in the Western world were established in African lands as branches and which have maintained in strict terms, their traditional doctrines and practices.

Anglican Churches:

These are churches which have special mutual relationship and doctrinal connection with the Church of England and churches in connection with it.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

I do not set out to present a detailed historical statement of the development or analysis of the Christian Church in Nigeria. I should therefore not be expected to provide this information. Much work has already been done on this subject by scholars and other historians. It should also be borne in mind that this project is not a New Testament study, nor is it a theological treatise on the subject of healing. Allusions, incidents and stories in the Bible will only be substantiated by quotations, references, and other relevant scriptural verses. Theological debates and arguments, for example, as to whether Jesus Christ performed miracles or whether the stories were created by the Gospel writers will not be entertained within the boundaries of this work. The provision and scope of this project will certainly not allow for such digressions.

My concern in this project is to stress the obvious, that the Traditional Churches in Nigeria (typical of Africa) have only accorded

little attention to one of the essential characteristics of ministry, namely, the healing ministry. I shall endeavor to suggest means and methods by which this irregularity can be amended.

WORK PREVIOUSLY DONE IN THE FIELD

Eye-witness Account.

Reporting his Christian experience in a book compiled by the editors of the Christian Life Magazine, Dawuda Maigari, a Nigerian student in the United States of America declared:

I was brought up in a denomination that does not want to hear anybody claiming that he can exercise the gift of healing today. Many of us grew up with that concept [teaching]. We forget that God promised us that if we have faith as small as a "mustard seed" we will be able to do many wonderful things, which I believe includes healing.⁹

Dawuda also confesses that:

My church seems not to really understand the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I was brought up in an environment that claimed the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially as far as healing is concerned and also speaking in tongues, probably don't apply to our own age today.

When somebody is sick in my church we say, "Let's pray for him." But our problem is this. We can only say, "Let's pray for the person." But we don't have enough faith to claim that God is going to heal the person.¹⁰

Dawuda must have been a member of one of the Traditional (Western-parented) churches because his experience is typical of the problems and challenges facing these Traditional churches in Africa, or Nigeria as a case in point.

Primary Sources.

H.W. Turner's History of an African Independent Church (Church of the Lord, Aladura) and in particular J.D.Y. Peel's ALADURA: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba, are both strictly sociological in approach. The two books however provide some historical documentation of the Aladura Churches of the Yoruba, in Western Nigeria. This project goes beyond presenting the history and social analysis of each of these groups of African Independent Churches, in that it provides an overview of what these churches have and which in comparison to the Traditional Churches they can also offer the latter to improve their healing ministry. J.F. Ade Ajayi's Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841 - 1891 with E.A. Ayandele's The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842 - 1914, are as the authors themselves suggest works on the political, social and historical analysis of the Western missionary enterprises in Nigeria. This project will benefit from these books in the light of the social and much more historical information that they will disseminate.

The writer of this project will be consulting C.P. Groves The Planting of Christianity in Africa Vols. II and III and Kenneth Scott Latourette's A History of the Expansion of Christianity, Vol. V, for the basic historical facts. There is a general survey of the arrival and the growth of Christianity in the respective countries and regions of Africa, and I shall be collecting from these books relevant historical materials which will be trimmed down to suit my writing and which will consequently be integrated with other materials collected from other disciplines in order to evolve at the argument and the solution of my thesis.

The pioneering studies of Geoffrey E. Parrinder in African Traditional Religion; and West African Religion; E.B. Idowu: Olodumare God in Yoruba Belief; J.S. Mbiti's African Religions and Philosophy; Daryll Forde's African Worlds; also C.G. Baeta's Prophetism in Ghana will offer information and additional facts with regards the religion, sociology; cosmological ideas and social values of the Nigerian as well as the African peoples. Howard Clinebell's Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling with McGoldrick, Pearce and Giordano's Ethnicity and Family Therapy will help in the writing of this project. The two books offer skills in the historical heritage, uniqueness, mission of pastoral care and counseling needed for such an enterprising subject as I am handling.

Secondary Sources.

These consist of -

- i. Articles, Journals and other relevant periodicals dealing with the history, religion and sociology of Africans especially Nigerians.
- ii. Manuscripts and unpublished thesis will also be consulted where appropriate, for example, the work of Musa Dimka Gotom titled "Towards an Indigenous Model for Pastoral Counseling and Care, Based on some Socio-Cultural, Anthropological and Theological Presuppositions of Certain Nigerian People," will prove to be useful.
- iii. Church publications will be offering essential information regarding the doctrines, beliefs and practices of most of these Churches, in particular, the African Independent Churches. These publications will also serve as cross-checking materials, especially where some other sources may tend to be faulty.

iv. Personal Accounts and Interviews: The writer and his wife, Adenikè are both Nigerians (Yoruba of Southwest Nigeria) with some cultural, traditional and Christian experiences about healing. I hope to draw on these resources add with those to be collected from African friends and members of some of the churches being studied.

The significance of this project lies in the fact that it is the only comparative study of the Traditional and African Independent Churches embarked upon, which as far as I know deals in depth and in detailed terms a particular, chosen area of the church's ministry, namely, the Healing Ministry.

PROCEDURE FOR INTEGRATION

This project involves the integration of primary literature in ecclesiastical historiography; social anthropology and comparative history of world religions.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter Two, CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN NIGERIA, introduces the reader to the country of Nigeria, the church and practice of Christianity with the impact of the Western missionary enterprises on the socio-cultural life of the society. Foundational to the project, Chapter Three, titled THE ART OF HEALING IN NIGERIAN TRADITIONAL CULTURE is a bold attempt to present a study of the art of healing in traditional Nigerian life. It is expected that this exercise will enable the reader to appreciate in depth and similarly in a sympathetic and understanding manner the nature and the religious values of the subjects--the Nigerian peoples--for whom this project is being

undertaken. This the writer believes will enhance the basis for the need of an active ministry of healing in all Churches in Nigeria.

Chapter Four, THE AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES, is devoted to the model of the project, the 'Independent Churches' and it discusses in some detail their conviction, beliefs, practices and the reasons for their popularity. Chapter Five is titled STRATEGIES FOR THE TRADITIONAL CHURCHES FOR THE HEALING MINISTRY and here I make some recommendations to the Traditional Churches, particularly on how they should emulate their African Independent counterparts, on the issue of healing in the church. No doubt should be entertained about the success of the Traditional Churches on this subject if these recommendations are well considered and properly implemented. Chapter Six, THE FUTURE, discusses issues and matters for the common interest of the two main Churches, including the possibility of constructive dialogue, friendly activities both to be seen as necessary avenues in promoting and realizing good will among members and all the Churches with the ultimate aim of enhancing the Gospel of Christ in Nigeria. Chapter Seven, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION, collates the findings of the chapters and offers conclusions about the subject of the project, mainly, the urgency and the indispensability of the healing ministry in the Church of Christ in Nigeria.

It is my hope and belief that by the completion of this work, I will have learned new methods and approaches in the area of the Healing Ministry, particularly in the Nigerian Church, with the ultimate objective of improving my ministry, and hence arriving at my goal, that of becoming a better minister.

Not that I have already obtained . . . or am already perfect; but I

press on to make it my own--straining forward to what lies ahead.
(Phil. 3:12-14)

NOTES

¹Bengt G.M. Sundkler, Bantu Prophets In South Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) p. 220.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Roy Lawrence, Christian Healing Rediscovered (Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980) p. 10.

⁵All Bible quotations in this project will be from the Revised Standard Version (RSV)

⁶Howard A. Snyder. The Community of the King (Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977) p. 125-126.

⁷Mortimer Arias, Announcing the Reign of God (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) p. 75.

⁸Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics (Edinburgh: Clark, 1962) IV/III/2, 830.

⁹Dawuda Maigeri, "Nigeria (Signs and Wonders Around the World Part II)," in Christian Life Magazine, Signs and Wonders Today (Wheaton, IL: Christian Life Missions, 1983) p. 54.

¹⁰Ibid.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

NIGERIA

The Country.

Nigeria derived its name from the great river Niger which flowed through it.¹ In full, Federal Republic of Nigeria, the country with an estimated population of 97 million,² is black Africa's most populous nation³ ranking as the world's tenth largest nation. It is said that one of every six Africans is a Nigerian.⁴

Nigeria's geographical area of 356,700 square miles (923,773 square kilometres) more than twice the size of California and four times the size of Great Britain qualifies it to be the 13th largest country in the African continent.⁵

Nigeria is situated on the west coast of Africa, on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea (which includes the Bights of Benin and Biafra). It lies within the parallels of 4 degrees and 14 degrees north and is thus entirely within the tropics.⁶ The country is bounded on the south by the sea, on the west by Benin republic; on the north by Niger republic; and on the east by the countries of Chad and Cameroun respectively (See Fig. 1).⁷ The creation of the country into one political unit was January 1, 1914, when the former Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigera (including Lagos, the former capital) merged with the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria to form the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria under the British government.⁸ The country

became independent in October 1, 1960, and three years later October 1, 1963, it became a Republic, and adopted a republican constitution. The country is the fourth largest in the Commonwealth of Nations, and also a member of the United Nations.⁹

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to touch the Nigerian soil. On reaching the country they established a trade center near Benin in the late 1400's and developed a slave trade with the African chiefs.¹⁰ British, Dutch, and other European traders later competed for control of the trade. By the 1700's the British were the leading slave traders on the Nigerian coast. In 1808, the British outlawed the slave trade.¹¹ Britain signed treaties with other European countries and with the local African rulers in an attempt to end the trade. British ships travelled along the Nigerian coast and captured ships that carried slaves. The British then set the slaves free at Freetown in Sierra Leone. British missionaries converted many of the freed slaves to Christianity. Some of the freed slaves later returned to Nigeria and worked with the British to spread Christianity along the coastal areas and in the Southwest, that is the main Yoruba speaking areas of the country.¹²

Today the country with nineteen states has a new capital at Abuja. She derives much of her revenue from her oil resources emerging as black Africa's wealthiest nation with a gross national product that is far more than half as large as that of the other black African nations combined. It is mainly an agricultural country, though efforts are currently being made to adjust and bring to normalcy the inadequacies experienced in this sector. A significant percentage of its total working population is engaged in producing sugar, cane, yams,

cassava, rice, plantain, beans and citrus for food. Apart from petroleum, the country exports cocoa, palm products, rubber, timber, and tin. Unlike many other African countries it has a sizeable number of educated men and women who through their proper training are capable of running its government, industry and armed forces.¹³

The People.

Authentic oral traditions claim that Nigerians have their ancestry from "the East"--Egypt or Arabia--and Mesopotamia.¹⁴ Marioghae and Ferguson for example wrote that Archdeacon Lucas, a Nigerian scholar and churchman in his book The Religion of the Yorubas attempts to trace the religion of the Yoruba from Egypt.¹⁵ However, common knowledge states that Nigeria is composed of numerous tribal and linguistic groups, great and small, speaking different languages, professing different religions, and in certain instances, having dissimilar manners and customs.¹⁶

There are about 200 ethnic groups in the country and the major ones are Hausa spreading over a large area of the North and forming about one quarter 21% of the entire population. The Yoruba of South West Nigeria are also a large group and make up a fifth 20% of the country's population. There is the Ibo of eastern Nigeria, comprising 17% and the Fulami a mixed stock, occupying the North-eastern area of the country make up 9% of the country's population.¹⁷

Other prominent but less numerous groups include the Edos, of Benin City, as well as the Ibibios, in the forest belt; the Tivs and Nupes, in the middle belt, and the Kannris, in the Chad Basin. The greatest concentration of smaller ethnic groups occurs in the middle

belt, where there are over 180 linguistic groups. In the Niger Delta the home of the Ijaws, social organization was altered radically during the period of slave trade, in part because of the forced migration of peoples from the interior into the area and in part because of contact with European traders. The distinct cultural group which emerged stressed its cultural separation from other groups rather than its common descent. Jaja of Opobo, a 19th century Chief renowned for defying the British was an Ibo who grew up among the Ijaw people of the Niger Delta.¹⁸

The great diversity of peoples and cultures in Nigeria is largely a result of the location of the country at the meeting point of transcontinental migration routes from north to south, west to east and southeast to northwest.

Culture and Tradition.

Nigeria and its lands are popular for their beauty and grace. Its culture, tradition, beliefs, practices and customs are often brilliantly expressed in the languages, songs, dances, dresses, and carvings of its people. In traditions, antiquities, and sculpture, it is one of the richest countries in Africa.¹⁹

Sources claim that early cultures in Nigeria could be traced to at least 700 B.C. From the 12th to the 14th centuries, more advanced cultures developed in the Yoruba area, at Ife, and in the north, where Muslim influence prevailed.²⁰ Professor D. Westerman once described the Yoruba as being:

remarkable for their attainments. They live in large communities . . . have a very highly developed religion and mythology and know something about their own history; they have always been an

enterprising people, and as traders and settlers exercise considerable influence beyond the boundaries of their own country.²¹

The above is also true of other Nigerians. They are also known for their warm hospitality. Nigerians have a general tradition of the solidarity of the family, respect for age, and care for the young. William H. Clark observes that the Yoruba for examples are

emphatically social people, strong in their attachments, ardent in their friendships . . . Their patriarchal life renders them a people fond of society and so increases their attachment with feuds continually to develop and strengthen social feelings of the man . . . the Yoruba are a very polite people, extending their civilities to the most trivial thing . . . They are exceedingly kind and hospitable . . . interesting people . . . ²²

Traditional practices include initiation ceremonies for boys and girls attaining the age of puberty. Some societies claim religious and social sanctions existing traditionally to ensure masculine domination, and act as the political watchdog of the society. Today there is a suspicion that some of these societies no longer function on healthy guidelines, and some only exist to achieve their selfish and dubious motives. With the impact of western civilization and other religions on the society, for example Christianity and Islam, some of their political and social grip on their respective communities has greatly diminished.²³ Some men still practice polygamy. The scope of this project would not allow for any lengthy discussion or debate on such issues as the one just mentioned. It might suffice however to say that polygamy used to be an old established custom throughout Nigeria, and to the African it was thought of as being a reasonable and almost essential institution. One of the theories is that the number of a man's wives demonstrates the size of his wealth, social status and societal

influence. The labour of his wives it is said adds to his income and enhances the family's wealth.²⁴ The relevance and functions of the culture, traditions, and traditional practices of Nigerians and Africans generally to this project will be adequately dealt with as this study progresses.

Religion.

The various subjects of this project revolve around that phenomenon which is very vital to men and Nigerians as members of the human race, are not an exception. This phenomenon is religion.²⁵ Bearing in mind the sensitivity and the involvement of this notion the writer will only discuss it in the light of the requirements of this chapter,--studying what the phenomenon is and what it means to Nigerians and where necessary to Africans.

One of the easiest means and perhaps best medium of knowing and approaching the Nigerians, and African is through their religion. This phenomenon is embedded and inseparably knitted into the fabric of their lives that it is not just possible to know them without their religion. John S. Mbiti affirms that Nigerians, like

Africans are notoriously religious, and each people has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all the departments so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it.²⁶

Discussing the Yoruba in this regard, Ojo says:

It is no overstatement to say that religion is not just one complex of African culture but a catalyst of other complexes . . . Some aspects of Yoruba life cannot be fully and satisfactorily explained and understood; they must be understood in terms of their religion.²⁷

Similarly, Idowu states that

. . . the real keynote of the life of the Yoruba is neither in their noble ancestry nor in the past deeds of their heroes. The keynote of their life is in their religion. In all things, they are religious. Religion forms the foundation and the all-governing principle of life for them.²⁸

All the above apply to other Nigerian peoples, Hausa, Ibo, Fulani, Ijaw; Tiv or Kanuri. They are born into religion, they grow into it, they live in it, they die and are buried in it, and their spirits continue to live and participate in the phenomenon. The permissive and pervasive attitude of Nigerians to religion immediately suggests to me that it is one of the reasons responsible for their being so easily impressed, enticed, and converted to other types of religions being preached to them; for example those "missionary" religions like Christianity and Islam, which they readily embraced. This point is due for discussion very soon in this project.

In the traditional religion, which now have about 19% of the country's population as its adherents,²⁹ the belief is that there exists a Supreme Being, whom the Yoruba call Olorun (owner of the sky) or Olodumare--the Deity--; and the Ibo call him Chukwu meaning the beneficent and just.³⁰ Because he is too important and remote to be concerned with the mundane and minor affairs of men, he has designated these functions to the care of the divinities called Orìṣà in Yoruba. Olodumare is supreme over all on earth and in heaven, acknowledged by all the divinities as head to whom all authority belongs and all allegiance is due. He is not one among the pantheon of divinities, he is "wholly other" than they. But they are under his vigilance and control, and to him they owe absolute fealty.³¹ As his appellation denotes, the Supreme Being is the Creator, the King, Omnipotent, All-wise, All-knowing, All-seeing, the Judge, Immortal, Holy. "He

speaks; he acts; he judges; he does all that a person of the highest authority, in whose control everything is, will do."³²

The traditional religious cult includes shrines, a priesthood, a highly developed system of sacrifice, festivals which are filled with music, dancing, singing and drama. Alongside this is a moral code, inculcating hospitality, chastity, generosity, truth, rectitude, honesty, protection for women and respect for elders. There is a strong belief in family solidarity, embracing the "extended family," and including those who have departed from this life. The belief in departed spirits further leads to the belief that death is not the end in life. There is communion with ancestors, who are manifested in the Egúngún and Orò rites, in the former through a masked and robed figure, in the latter through the voice of the bull-roarer. There is some belief in re-incarnation, evidenced by the common names, Babátúndé (Yoruba = Father returns) and Yétúndé (Yoruba = Mother returns). More definite is the belief in a definite place, other than this earth, to which the deceased go.³³

The traditional religion which has similar systems of belief and cultural practice and expectations throughout the various tribal groups have thus been described. Islam, which claims about 49% of the country's population, the majority of which live in the north is known as a book religion but has managed to retain some of the traditional values, customs, practices and belief systems. Christianity, the most progressive of all in evangelistic outreach is built on western structures and seeks to fulfill western principles thus earning for its adherents the name Yan Mishan, Hausa for, "the children of the missionary." About 39% of the country's population are today known as Christians.³⁴

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

The Establishment of Christianity.

History. It is yet to be ascertained when Christianity first arrived in Africa. Writing in 1926, Edwin Smith says

. . . from almost the earliest period of her history the Church has never been absent from Africa. Christian communities existed in Africa long before they were found in the British Isles and Northern Europe . . . 35

Professor Mbiti echoes a similar fact as he says "Christianity in Africa is so old that it can rightly be described as an indigenous, traditional and African religion."³⁶ As early as 1491, Portuguese priests had landed in Angola. In 1751, an Anglican clergyman, the Rev. Thomas Thompson, had visited the Gold Coast. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, several missions had visited various parts of Africa, "all branches of the Church in Europe vied in holy rivalry to spread the Christian faith." All over the continent of Africa traces and evidences abound of ancient Christian civilizations, which have either perished, and whose record is lost, but which are manifested in some of the local customs, practices or indigenous rituals.³⁷

Southern Nigeria. The Christian community in Nigeria, apart from the sixteenth-century Portuguese mission in the Kingdom of Benin,³⁸ dates from the 1840's when the missionary pioneers of the traditional churches began their endeavours.³⁹ It is also appropriate that a history of the inception of Christianity in any part of West Africa, indeed Nigeria, be traced from the first field of missionary enterprise known as Sierra Leone.⁴⁰ This British Colony of the west coast of Africa also provided many missionaries who promoted the growth of the

Church in all the coastal cities. With the advantage of being the first to receive the gospel, Sierra Leone led West Africa in church organization by submerging the European-controlled mission, and in creating an African-controlled church. T.A. Beetham observes that the first organisation of a full Christian community among Africans was a genuine lay movement. He noted that:

Men took their faith with them to their new home and shared it with the recently freed captives landed in their midst from Dahomey, Nigeria, Cameroon and Congo.⁴¹

Ayandele reports that in the Niger Mission of 1841, Bishop Crowther, realised that the best evangelists were those without higher Western education.

They were mainly middle-aged shoemakers, shingle makers, carpenters, farmers, bricklayers, government messengers and stewards on board ships, people who had no formal education of any kind or very elementary education for two or three years in a mission school. They were most useful for spade work. What they lacked in formal education they had in wisdom which grew with their age, and tactics which enabled them to deal successfully with the chiefs. They were unsophisticated folk who took the Bible seriously and treated [handled] it with deep, pious reverence. In the judgements of all the missions, such men lived Christ more than they talked him.⁴²

The Colony of Sierra Leone was founded by a philanthropic company as a home for freed slaves.⁴³ The Church Missionary Society (CMS) was founded in 1799 by men who had been active in the Sierra Leone Company. It was not surprising that Sierra Leone should be one of the first areas of interest. Missionaries were sent out in 1804. The mission proved both a challenge and an opportunity for the CMS. The challenge lay in the climatic unsuitability of the coast for Europeans and in the lack of modern precedent in missionary methods. The opportunity was the ability to reach a significant number of Africans who were uprooted from their

tribal surroundings and who represented a variety of ethnic groups.⁴⁴

Before the slave trade was completely abolished many ex-slaves of Freetown in the 1840's started for various reasons to migrate to cities along the coast from the Gambia to Calabar in what is now Cross River State of Nigeria. Some returned to their tribes, others searched for their relatives, and some settled in other cities for the sake of the trading opportunities available. By 1860 there existed small communities of Christian ex-slaves, or Sierra Leonians as they were called, in all the cities along the coast as far as three hundred miles inland. As the missionaries were called to begin work in these towns, the establishment of mission stations, churches and the spread of the gospel began in earnest.⁴⁵

The largest migration flowed back to Lagos and its hinterland, the Yoruba country, and especially to Abeokuta, capital of the Yoruba Ègbá Kingdom. But they missed the life of Freetown, with its educational opportunities and religious fellowship. One, James Ferguson by name, a Methodist, after only three weeks at Badagri, wrote to his minister: "I know that once I was under light, and now I am in darkness." Another wrote, "For Christ's sake, come quick."⁴⁵ The Methodists acted first. The Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, the energetic superintendent of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission at Cape Coast who had displayed outstanding abilities by his own accounts of his two visits to Ashanti was asked to occupy Badagri as an out-station of Cape Coast. His arrival on 24 September 1842, marked the effective beginning of missionary enterprise, not only in Yorubaland, but in the whole country. Freeman was accompanied by a Fanti, "assistant missionary," William de Graft, and his wife. de Graft had earlier been working at Winneba.

Freeman bought a small piece of ground on which he built a small chapel and also an elaborate mission house which the people around always gazed at in astonishment. He worked in Badagri organizing and holding prayer meetings on Sundays with the Sierra Leone emigrants, settling their disputes, obtaining land for them from the authorities and sharing it out to them. He saw, however, that the majority of those who had arrived, and those who were still arriving did not stay in Badagri, but were moving out to Abéòkuta. When he visited them on Sunday, 11 December, Chief Sódèké and other Ègbá chiefs including the emigrants, received him very warmly.

Freeman, son of an African father and an English mother, writes Marioghae and Ferguson, was a man of rare grace of character, dignified and courteous, tactful and firm, and a tireless evangelist.⁴⁷ It is remarkable to note that the first mission station to be found in Nigeria was established by a man with an African descent.

Northern Nigeria. Following the vigorous activities of the respective Christian bodies in southern Nigeria, the missionary enterprise journeyed and expanded to northern Nigeria. This area which was within the mission field of the Anglican (CMS) became part of Bishop Crowther's Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa, beyond the Queen's Dominions.⁴⁸ After Crowther's death in December 1891,⁴⁹ this area became the Anglican Diocese of Equatorial Africa. Other churches within this Diocese included the Niger Delta Church, and the District Councils of Lagos, Ìbàdàn and Abéòkuta. Gordon Hewitt informs us that the CMS mission headquarters was at Lokoja, a cosmopolitan town near the confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers. Lokoja had since been a mission centre since the Second Niger expedition of 1865.⁵⁰ Other

mission centres in the north are in the Nupe country northwest of Lokoja, at Bida, a major town, and at Katcha on the Baro-Kano railway which was already nearing completion in 1910. There were also mission centres in the Bauchi Jos, Plateau and in the Hausa states with headquarters at Zaria.

Why the New Religion Thrived and Appealed to the People. I have earlier discussed the permissive attitude of Nigerians and Africans generally when it comes to matters of religion and how this could be strongly considered as a great inherent factor responsible for their being easily converted to other new faiths and beliefs.⁵¹ In as much as one can make a catalogue of points of divergence between Christianity and African traditional religion so could we make an exhaustive list of their points of convergence and similarities. The latter supports the view that the Lord of the vineyard himself had prepared the way--African peoples--for the reception of the Christian religion when it arrived. For example, such African traditional values like godliness, the concept of fatherhood; respect, honor, hospitality, magnanimity, purity, truth, hard work, good character (Yoruba = *ìwà*); living in conformity with one's conscience; all of which are paralleled in the teachings of Christianity, were not strange to the Nigerians when the Gospel was preached to them. In fact scholars claimed that some of these points of contact were not properly utilised by the western missionaries in preaching the Gospel to the Africans, and here again we meet with one of the major issues, problems which this project sets out to deal with. A fuller discussion of this [point] will therefore be made in the succeeding chapters of this work. Indeed the attributes of God in African traditional religion are so "Christian" that many 19th century

ethnographers doubted their originality.⁵² On his arrival to Africa, therefore, the western evangelist was not preaching an entirely new God to candidates; he was in fact preaching a familiar God who has been revealed to Africans positively in His Son.⁵³

The early western missionary was himself a model who communicated the message of the Gospel through his own speech and exemplary character. People saw him in the Lord whom he commended to them and believed.⁵⁴

With their characteristic religious enthusiasm and piety, Africans assisting the missionaries, trained or untrained displayed extraordinary zeal and tenacity in preaching the Christian faith. Examples abound in Thomas Birch Freeman; De Graft Johnson of the Gold Coast; Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther pioneer in many ways and father of the Niger mission whose task was described as "an impossible one," and Bishop James Johnson.⁵⁵

The Christian religion demonstrated itself as a religion of salvation. The religion played a great role in the emancipation of slavery and the eradication of the illegal trade on the West African coast.⁵⁶ William Wilberforce and Fewell Buxton, late CMS missionaries, would be remembered for leading the anti-slave trade movement in Britain. In his many publications and speeches, Buxton advocated the rehabilitation of Africa through the "Bible [Christianity] and the plough [agriculture]."⁵⁷ The earlier would provide the forces of moral and spiritual rebirth, while the later would improve the standard of living, and provide an alternative export to the illicit trade in men.⁵⁸ The liberated slaves were rehabilitated and taught, besides the truths of Christianity to read and write. The rehabilitation of the freed slaves

involved securing for them gainful occupations, the improvement in their conditions and ways of living and therefore deliverance from material want.

This three-fold salvific act,--physical, spiritual and mental, also material--constituted another effective factor in promoting the Christian religion in Nigeria. The acts were practical and glaring for others to see, to the extent that the people embraced Christianity, either from a genuine desire to be saved, or for the personal motives, that of economic emancipation and satisfaction which they could derive from the new religion. Discussing this point, with regards the Yoruba, Awolalu quoting Ayandele seems to share the latter's extremist view as he says:

There was no open hostility or persecution, but the hold of the traditional religion on the people was very firm. They had welcomed missionaries not because they wanted Christianity, but because they were weak and poor and they hope that the missionaries could attract some trade back to the town.⁵⁹

Ayandele claimed that educated Africans changed to the new religion for achieving political and national objectives.⁶⁰

Christianity thrived and expanded in Nigeria during the advent of the western missionaries because of European influence on the hosts. European merchants, explorers, and administrators brought material goods to the Africans, as gifts, from their country. Ayandele who only in part believes that the missionaries motive for Nigeria was purely spiritual--evangelisation--contends that the only way by which this assignment could be realised was by the missionaries themselves becoming "the secular arm of Britain."⁶¹ Evidence suggest that this statement was partly true of the method adopted by the missionaries.⁶² Records abound of the pattern of overseas political governments, sponsoring and

supporting Christian missions in Africa.⁶³ Nigeria was no exception; and Ayandele in one of his several references describes the relationship as a "spirit of the amity that . . . prevailed between missionaries and administration overseas [political rulers] . . ."⁶⁴ Mbiti illustrates this by quoting a Gikuyu proverb: "There is no Roman Catholic Priest and a European--both of them are the same!"⁶⁵

Nigerians embraced Christianity because in it they saw a platform for social status and distinction. For example in places like Abẹ̀òkuta and Ìjẹ̀bú, where the impact of western education has been adduced as the major factor in the development of Western Nigeria, Christians were referred to as "the people of books."⁶⁶ Christianity thus emerged as a religion with a prestige value. Hence the new religion became closely associated with "civilization"; and in some instances

. . . to be able to call oneself a church member, even though one's association is extremely tenuous, confers a certain status; and loss of status is often regarded as the greatest disadvantage in being suspended from a church or in changing from one denomination to another.⁶⁷

Most African nations including Nigeria, were prepared for the missionaries' religion when it arrived by their yearning and longing for a better way of life and existence. The entire continent was facing ravages of the slave trade; inter-tribal wars; menace of famine and deadly living situations; the jihad (holy war) of Islam, all these contributed to making the African countries including Nigeria prepared to at least test another form of approach to life. On their arrival, the missionaries imposed their patterns of life and system of governments on their new converts. Holy days, like Sundays, Christmas, Easter ceremonies were declared holidays for all in the country, and

thus, everyone at least at that time were under the influence of the Christian religion.

Education and medicine are important contributing factors for the expansion of Christianity in Nigeria. These institutions will soon be discussed.

Characteristics of a Traditional (Western-Parented) Church.

Denominationalistic and Divided. Myriads of Christian missions attended by their various nature invaded the "Dark Continent" of Africa following the evangelical revival in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. The traditional churches which they founded were strictly patterned and nurtured after their home models. The effect of this action was that the new churches became carbon-copies and often times colonies of the home churches, void of their own indigenous African images either in organisational structure, administration; liturgy and the total spiritual life of the people. These are factors which if properly handled could be seen as necessary and essential to the growth and expansion of the Church in Africa. Also, the pattern of the various different structures, traditions, liturgical variations of the western missions, were inherited by the church in Africa, with the result that there were a many ideologies in a Church of Christ as there were as many missionary bodies. Denominationalism and divided Christianity emerged as the vogue instead of Christian love and brotherhood. Mbiti laments:

Denominationalism is one of the worst divisive elements in modern Africa; and some of the denominations have engaged in physical fighting, while today they compete for converts and in homiletical propaganda.⁶⁸

Ironically their divisive nature some writers contend was one of the

contributing factors to the expansion of the religion when it arrived in African lands.⁶⁹

Imposing Edifices and Grandiose Building Programs. For reasons best known to them, the nineteenth century missionaries in Africa, characteristically and practically demonstrated concern for large projects and buildings. In small, stagnating newly formed parishes, there was usually the urge to build an imposing church, a parish hall; big mansion for the priest; a social center, kindergarten or school, even though regular church attendance at some stations is below 50 percent and outlying stations can seldom be visited. Some of the missions have been deceived for evaluating their successes and extent of their work by the number and size of their buildings and projects. This emphasis was always at the expense of the more essential part of the ministry,--the care and nurture of souls. Nigerian and African church leaders who succeeded the expatriate missionaries were always tempted to follow this pattern in this regard. Mbiti summarily describes this type of Christianity as one "which is active in church building."⁷⁰

Produced the Working Force and a New Class of People. The foreign missionaries pioneered formal western education, modern health and social development of the emerging continent of Africa. It was those people who embraced their religion and those people who joined their churches that soon got the new clerical jobs, who worked at the new schools as teachers and at the health facilities as medical personnel. A new social class was invariably created. Ajayi describes the trend as:

civilization around the Mission House. That is to say the immediate beneficiaries besides European traders were those in close contact with the missionaries, the converts and their friends and relatives to some extent, the emigrants above all.⁷¹

Ìdòwú writing in 1965 confirmed the phenomenon saying:

Christianity conferred a status upon its converts: they were in a class by themselves. Even today in Abeokuta Christians are called 'the bookish ones' or 'the people with books.' It is a religion with a prestige value. Christians were in the forefront of a new enlightenment throughout the continent and they and their children set the fashion which the impressionable Africans followed. Christianity also enabled people to earn their livelihood in "clean" jobs, a situation which was greatly exploited by the Church. Chiefs became friends of missionaries and either professed Christianity themselves or surrendered their children for education and baptism, undoubtedly because of expected political or material benefits; but the Church found this acceptable and rejoiced at it.⁷²

Imported or No Theology.

Because the European and the Western missionaries rejected all that was traditional when they arrived in Africa, they could not relate the Christian teaching and faith to the natural life of their hosts, and this approach affected the theology that emerged in the Traditional Churches. It was a replica of the theology of the West which was mostly unsuitable for Africans.

The European or Western missionaries did not take time to observe points of common belief and conflict between the traditional practices and Christianity, with a view of resolving and reconciling the differences where necessary. For example the missionaries insisted that monogamy should be a condition of church membership. They would always refer to polygamists, respected in the traditional society as living in adultery.⁷³ To the pioneer Western missionary, Christianity was not distinct from his or her own culture and philosophy. The missionaries

physically left their homes to work in Africa, but they did not part with their respective cultures. Rather it was the African converts who had to part with their own people, their society, ancestors and customs.⁷⁴ To the European and Western missionaries, African converts to Christianity must be reborn not only spiritually, but culturally and socially. They:

therefore considered it their duty not only to convert Africans to Christianity but also to make them give up and forget their past entirely and live up to their new dignity.⁷⁵

The result of this attitude and teaching was that the Traditional Churches in Africa grew up without a relevant theology of their own, or as Mbiti describes it: "The Church here now finds itself in the situation of trying to exist without a theology."⁷⁶

Paternalistic. The traditional churches in Africa were largely founded and supported by money and manpower from their overseas headquarters and churches. That is to say, they had good control over their mission churches. This fact did not allow the recipients--their hosts--to wield any influence or contribute their own talents other than money to the "building" of the Church. The indigenes only had to hear and obey orders either from the home offices or resident missionaries, because as an African proverb puts it: "He who pays the piper, dictates the tune." Because of the control which the European and American missionaries exert over their African converts and congregations, Mbiti observed that: "This means that Europeans and Americans are seen as ruling Africans both in political and ecclesiastical matters."⁷⁷

Excessively Bureaucratic. One of the complaints generally levied against the Traditional Churches in Africa is that they hold too

many meetings, and are too formal; always running the church, a spiritual organism, like a mundane institution; for example, the secular government. Sometimes there are internal struggles for power and position. Too much time is being given to institutionalisation and organisation that the basic things--the care of souls, religious instruction, and the administration of the sacraments--are neglected.

The Contribution of Education and Medicine.

It is a fact that the climatic entry point of missionary endeavour in Africa coincided with the dramatic expansion of industrialism and the need for new economic outlets and thus with the climactic stage of European imperialism. This trend as history proves it was only a coincidence.

Whatever may have been added or adduced to missionary motives, it was clear and unanimous that these evangelists left their homes and churches with the genuine purpose of fulfilling the Gospel mandate to preach the Gospel to all the nations (Mt 28:19-20); and to execute some humanitarian obligations.

David Livingstone wrote:

Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind . . . Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink, but let this only be for a moment.

I go to Central Africa. It is probable I may die there; but brethren, I pray you, see to it that the door is never closed again.⁷⁸

Education. Both education (primarily) and medicine according to the missionaries, were to be used as their avenues in preaching the good

news of the Gospel to Africans. These two activities like the parabolic mustard seed germinated, grew and demonstrated their strength to the amazement of everyone. Sir Alan Burns says of education:

Although with the missions religious training was naturally the first object, the country still owes them a great debt of gratitude for the work they have accomplished in laying the foundations of education in Nigeria.⁷⁹

Through their educational programs, and the revolutionary nature of the Christian Gospel, the movement to independence and nationalism was created, and, today, many African nations are independent political and indeed ecclesiastical communities. It was the aim of the missionaries to educate the new converts and the infant church in Nigeria, so that they would not be spiritually starved. As they said through Bowen:

We desire to establish the Gospel in the hearts and minds and social life of the people, so that truth and righteousness may remain and flourish among them, without the instrumentality of foreign missionaries. . . . To establish the Gospel among any people, they must have Bibles and therefore must have the art to make them or the money to buy them. They must read the Bible and this implies instruction.⁸⁰

The major languages of the Nigerian peoples were studied and mastered by the foreign missionaries in order to disseminate the gospel to the latter in their own languages. Schools were built only to inculcate religious instruction, and the essential knowledge considered adequate for the converts and their siblings was the three R's--Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic--with particular emphasis on the Bible and religious tracts translated into the vernacular.⁸¹ Children and their parents were induced by the missionaries to read and learn by offering the students free education and taking some of the potentially brilliant ones to Britain to study theology and work in the translation of the Bible. Others were given industrial training to provide the working

force of the population. It is necessary at this juncture to point out that I am handicapped by the provision and scope of this project not to discuss to any detail, the historical development of the pattern of education in Nigeria, interesting as this may be. I can only add here that educational institutions similar to those of Freetown were developed early in Lagos.⁸² These include Igbobi College, a joint venture of Anglicans and Methodists; CMS Grammar School, Bariga, Lagos founded in 1859. Another important pattern of educational activity was set into motion after the opening of the first teacher training institution in the country in Abelokuta in 1849. In 1876, the Society of African Missions (Roman Catholic) founded St. Gregory's College in Lagos; and in 1877 the Wesleyan Mission opened the Methodist High School and Training Institution. In the eighties, Ayandele informs us that the American Baptist Mission established the Baptist Academy in Lagos, and in 1906, they laid the foundation of what "flowered" into the Baptist College, Iwo.⁸³

As these Christian missions thought of the urgency of higher education for the Nigerian peoples, and worked towards educating many converts from various walks of life, they clearly demonstrated that Christianity as an incarnational religion cares for the health of the Body and the development of the mind, as well as the commitment of the spirit. It was Jesus who added to the Old Testament Commandment the words that we are to love God with our minds. Even to this day, the great majority of Nigeria's leaders, in the church, in politics, in medicine, in law, the Civil Service and even in education itself owe their beginnings and their positions in the Nigerian society to their education in a mission school. The writer himself is a beneficiary of

the missionary educational endeavour. He attended primary and secondary schools, and graduated from higher institutions, all founded and almost staffed by expatriate missionaries.⁸⁴

Medicine. This activity was initiated through the establishment of hospitals as a supplement to education, in the missionaries' effort to care for the needs of the communities in which they exist, just as the activities of architecture, building, printing which they organized were expected to do.⁸⁵ By 1914, there had been founded by the CMS Iyi Enu Hospital near Ouitsha, the Baptist Hospital in Ogbomoso, the Wesley Guild Hospital in Ilesa and the Sacred Heart Hospital of the Society of African Missions in Abeokuta. Because of the greater faith in traditional medical opportunities, and the lack of trust in the European medical skills, the generality of Nigerians were not very enthusiastic in patronizing and accepting Western medicine as they did education or the new religion, when it was introduced to them.⁸⁶

Missionary Strategy.

The gift of wisdom is one of those graces dispensed by the Holy Spirit. It is wisdom that helps a missionary or an evangelist and other church worker to be able to discern the right from the wrong and arrive at the right conclusion. There is an ability to coordinate knowledge, to balance and judge things properly in relation to God. With wisdom, the missionary can scrutinize the utmost depths of God. The wisdom referred to here is not the human wisdom but that acquired by the Spirit. It is that mentioned in I Cor 2:10 "For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." Here there is a capacity to see the picture whole. There is a facility to penetrate the appearance of

things and get at their roots. With this gift, "the Spiritual man judges all things." (I Cor 2:15)

For the church worker,--priest, evangelist or missionary--, this gift is very important. There is one's own experience of God, of one's own culture and formation, but when one arrives and encounters a new situation, it is essential that the newcomer decides on what type of activity and the necessary strategies to be adopted in order to enhance the promotion of God's Kingdom. In other words, the missionary or evangelist needs to be a wise person. A wise churchworker appreciates the fact that the customs, traditions and practices of the people ministered to must be learned, assimilated, and be of service in the life of the missionary. The wise missionary neither dominates nor imposes but plays the role of servant to the people to be evangelized. The effective and successful missionary needs to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ who being "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mt 20:28) The Church that will emerge out of the newly converted will express their culture and their sense of religion. It will certainly not be a carbon copy of the religiosity or have the structures of the missionary's own culture. The missionary exercising the gift of wisdom will wisely decide on what might best be done that Christ's salvific message of love may be known, lived and allowed to thrive in a genuinely Christian community. Indeed the "incarnated" missionary could be described as one who has taken the pains to know his or her people, their culture, customs and traditions. Their language is learned and dialogue is entered into. Slowly, and gently the image of the unknown God who lives in and among them is unveiled, revealed and embraced.

The Missionaries and the New Field.

When the western missionaries who obeying the Gospel mandate of Matthew 28:19: "Go . . . and make disciples of all nations . . . " arrived in Africa, they did not realize or perhaps advertently disregarded the fact that their hosts, (the Africans) were two-tiered philosophers, who believe that man is both physical and spiritual. Africans believe that

. . . the spiritual universe is a unit with the physical, and that these two intermingle and dovetail into each other so much that it is not easy, or even necessary, at times to draw the distinction or separate them.⁸⁷

All societies function and exist with the strong concept of sickness and the practice of medicine; African societies are no exception. In fact to the African, religion and medicine are closely interlinked and indivisible. To him, the concepts of health and sickness were an absolutely integral part of a single mesh of social structure and religious consciousness inside which people lived unhesitatingly. The advent of the European and the Western missionaries in Africa coincided with the wake of Western imperialism, and a supposed enlightenment of the eighteenth century Europe which has rationalized away the reality and existence of the Devil. The tendency and quite often the practice therefore was to dismiss the Spirits as pure figments of the imagination and believing in them as ethereal, personal beings. The missionaries often maintained that there were no witches or completely pretended that the idea of principalities and powers are superstitious, unthinkable and inconceivable. The trend is perhaps better illustrated in the words of Father Michael Singleton, who writing in 1977, explains his dilemma and said:

The Church [that is, the Traditional Church] does not like her missionary priests meddling with medicine let alone psychology and, as those who have seen The Exorcist will realize, permission for a regular exorcism is not readily given.⁸⁸

The above explains the attitude of the pioneer missionaries in Africa towards the beliefs traditions and cultural practices of their hosts. Such behaviours had deep and far reaching consequences in the dispensation of their various ministries--especially the healing activities of the churches which they organized. This approach developed into a sort of anti-healing or "no-healing" ministry a tendency which until today has become a liability or a disturbing legacy of such Traditional Churches. Hence the basis of this thesis.

One of the traits of African traditional religion is the inseparableness of religion from life itself. In the traditional religion, there is no separation between the sacred and the secular. A person's religion constitutes a major part of the character of his personality. His or her religion determines how he or she will act in any situation in life; in sowing, cultivating the field, harvest; also the way and manner in which he or she participates in and outside his society.⁸⁹ Religion also provides a distinctive slant to the customs, life-style and socialization of the clan.

Since religion is a great influencing factor in the individual's as well as the community's life, a change in this regard, would normally require a change in medicine, or other aspects of life. Whenever it occurred, the success of the Western medical treatment to the traditional African simply means superior power of the Western medical practitioners and their methods of treatment. In any medical system faith in its healing process is an important factor in cure. Having

been brought up believing in one medical system, an individual may never be able to acquire complete faith in another. He may reject both or patronize both. Of even greater significance was that the Christian population outnumbered the ability of the Christian missions to provide European type medical facilities for it. Many African Christians therefore were compelled to patronize traditional doctors which required a faith believed to be incompatible with the Christian faith. Furthermore certain traditional doctors, for example among the Yoruba in South West Nigeria, were as able--even, as people attest, more able--as European doctors in the curing of infertility and mental illness. In the latter case, the method used was similar to the principle which Christ seems to have adopted; a system which taught that the curing of the insane is a process of casting out demons.⁹⁰

On their arrival to Africa, missionaries cajoled or threatened African chiefs on behalf of religious freedom for their converts. In their books, Ajayi and Ayandele inform us that missionaries and converts alike became fanatics. They sought total separation from African life: African dancing and amusements, African dress, names and alcoholic drinks, African political institutions and moral codes were considered heathen and uncouth and things to be shunned.⁹¹ Converts sought to model themselves on the family life and dress, social and moral behaviour of the missionaries. A shirt and tie and a European name became the symbols of the new religion whose motto was, "Come out from among them and be ye separate." Christianity thus became fashionable, its material and political benefits becoming obvious.⁹² Because of the way in which Christian Yoruba controlled the junior colonial service in Nigeria, Muslim Yoruba humourously noted that the Christian god paid

higher salaries than the god of Islam. Thousands moved toward the Christian churches and thousands began to call themselves Christian. Shortage of funds and personnel prevented the thorough Christian indoctrination of the new converts which the first and second generations have received. This factor with the inability of the missionaries and their new religion to meet the spiritual and psychological needs of the African converts, made the latter resorting to traditional forms of relief. This action involved mixing some of the traditional religions practices which the African Christian had earlier forsaken with Christianity.⁹³ They might dress in European clothes and attend church on Sunday, then put on African dress and consult the diviner and traditional medicine-man and priest on Monday. Some parents were seen to be presenting their babies, decorated with protective charms, to the Christian clergyman for baptism. A story was, for example told of a man, who at the entrance to his room hung a scripture reading: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." But immediately next to this were gourds and amulets--emblems and objects of traditional divinities upon whom he was also calling lest he should lack anything.

The above expresses the dilemmas and the experiences of the new Africa convert at the dawn of the European missionary enterprise in Africa; the confusion created in his mind, and how all these circumstances (and others beyond the scope of this work) generated the birth of the African Independent Churches, which started to address the problems of their (African) members within the provisions of their cultural and theological context.

SUMMARY

Christianity in Nigeria owed its origins to Sierra Leone. A number of freed slaves who returned to their original home in Western Nigeria (particularly Lagos, Badagri and Abeokuta) appealed for help in human resources, especially leadership; and so both the Anglicans and Methodists first responded, while other missions including the Roman Catholic followed. The missionaries genuinely did seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, (evangelism) when they arrived and other developments such as education, medicine, architecture, printing and commerce, were only the corrolaries of their religious endeavours.

The influence of the various overseas Christian bodies in the country was tremendous. It was heroic. It was also salvific in that it enlarged men's visions, freed their minds of superstitious shackles and liberated their spirits from unnecessary fears. Christianity, the new religion, provided a progressive outlook and a sense of personal values and identity. More people were able to understand and have a belief in the Supreme God. The sacredness of human life and human responsibility were well impressed on their minds. Though the missionaries genuine religious enterprises were marred by the records of their blindness and downright disregard for African traditional customs and beliefs, yet the groundwork of Christianity, education and health which they laid should not be allowed to crumple and fall apart. Several indigenous African missionary agents and assistants worked with the early European missionaries in Nigeria and Africa. Succeeding, generations of Nigerians and Africans, could only improve on their predecessors efforts by discharging their religious and civic responsibilities faithfully and efficiently.

The quality of the missionaries' endeavours are far more important than the activities with which they are involved. It could therefore be disturbing to observe a definite tendency to overestimate the quality of someone's work by laying too great an emphasis on its quantity. The important thing that should be studied about all the statistics regarding mission work--buildings, humanitarian activities evangelism--is how efficiently they are contributing to the ministering to souls, strengthening, implanting and preserving that faith from defection. It is also important to consider how the endeavours of the missionaries have contributed to the development of the respective hosting communities. Such qualities constitute a fine evaluation of missionary success.

NOTES

¹ Michael Marioghae and John Ferguson, Nigeria Under the Cross (London: Highway Press, 1965) p. 1.

² Time, 124:6 (August 6, 1984) 25.

³ Information Please Almanac: Atlas & Yearbook 1983, 37th ed. (New York: A & W, 1982) p. 238.

⁴ Time, 123:3 (January 16, 1984) 24.

⁵ The World Almanac & Book of Facts 1984 (New York: Newspapers Enterprise Association, 1983) p. 526.

⁶ Alan Burns, History of Nigeria (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969) p. 16.

⁷ The World Almanac, p. 526.

⁸ Burns, p. 16.

⁹ Ibid., p. 17; also Marioghae and Ferguson, p. 2.

¹⁰ Burns, p. 78.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 103; also E.A. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis (London: Longman, 1966) p. 3.

¹² Marioghae and Ferguson, p. 32.

¹³ Time, 123:3 (January 16, 1984) 24.

¹⁴ Burns, p. 25.

¹⁵ Marioghae and Ferguson, p. 5.

¹⁶ Alan Burns, p. 25.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 25-77; also The World Almanac, p. 526.

¹⁸ G.O.M. Tasie, Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta (Leiden: Brill, 1978) pp. 1-31.

¹⁹ Things to See and Know About Nigeria (Dublin: John Hinde Limited, n.d.) p. 11; also Marioghae and Ferguson, op. cit., p. 3ff.

20The World Almanac, p. 526.

21D. Westerman in Africa, Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, 2:4 (1912) 341-342.

22William H. Clarke, Travels and Explorations in Yorubaland (Ibadan: University Press, 1972) pp. 236-247.

23Geoffrey Parrinder, West African Religion (London: Epworth Press, 1969) pp. 128-136.

24A lot of discussion and writing has been done and is currently been made on the subject of polygamy and other social issues regarding the Nigerian as well as the African peoples. See for example: John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (London: Heinemann, 1969) pp. 142-5; also Geoffrey Parrinder, Religion in an African City (London: Oxford University Press, 1953) p. 163ff.

25E. Bolaji Idowu, African Traditional Religion: A Definition (London: S.C.M. Press, 1973) pp. 2-3. Claiming that man is incurably religious, Professor Idowu says:

Religion is an inescapable involvement of every member of the human race. We are all of us religious in the sense that we believe in the sacred and are committed to one "faith" or another; in the sense that those who seek and try to establish a "reasonable and acceptable substitute" religion, or in the sense of those who think that they are only interested in religion, except in so far as they seek to fill up life's long void with spiritualism, astrology, magic or some other forms of occultism.

26Mbiti, p. 1.

27G.J. Afolabi Ojo, Yoruba Culture (London: University of London Press, 1966) p. 158.

28E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief (London: Longman, 1962) p. 5; also, J. Olumide Lucas, The Religion of the Yorubas (Lagos: C.M.S. Press, 1948) p. 33, 245.

29The World Almanac, p. 526.

30Marioghae and Ferguson, p. 16.

31Idowu, Olodumare, p. 62.

32Ibid., p. 39.

33Burns, pp. 35-36.

34The World Almanac, p. 526.

35E.W. Smith, The Christian Missions in Africa (New York, New York: International Missionary Council, 1926) p. 8.

36Mbiti, p. 229.

37Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper & Row, 1975) I, 286-289.

38Burns, p. 269.

39John B. Grimley and G.E. Robinson, Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966) p. 36.

40T.A. Beetham, Christianity and the New Africa (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967) p. 9.

41Ibid., p. 10.

42Ayandele, pp. 286-7.

43J.F. Ade Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965) p. 25.

44Beetham, p. 10.

45Ajayi, pp. 25-52.

46Marioghae and Ferguson, p. 32.

47Ibid.

48Edmund P.T. Crampton, Christianity in Northern Nigeria (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1979) p. 27.

49Grimley and Robinson, p. 40.

50Gordon Hewitt, The Problems of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society 1910-1942 (London: S.C.M. Press, 1971) I, 72.

51See Page 18-19 of this work.

52Idowu, Olodumare, pp. 38-47; also John S. Mbiti, Concepts of

God in Africa (New York: Praeger, 1970) passim.

53Dickson Kwesi and Paul Ellingworth, eds., Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs (New York: Orbis Books, 1969) passim.

54Marioghae and Ferguson, pp. 39-40.

55Ibid., pp. 33-42; and Ayandele, p. 28.

56F.D. Walker, The Romance of the Black River (London: C.M.S., 1931) p. 14ff.

57Ajayi, pp. 10-11.

58Ayandele, p. 180; also J.F. Ade Ajayi, pp. 10-18.

59J. Omosade Awolalu, Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites (London: Longman, 1972) p. 186; also Ayandele, pp. 175-179.

60Ayandele, pp. 179-180.

61Ibid., pp. xvii-xviii.

62Ibid., pp. 32-136.

63E. Bolaji Idowu, "The Predicament of the Church in Africa" in C.G. Beata (ed.) Christianity in Tropical Africa: Studies Presented and Discussed at the Seventh International African Seminar, University of Ghana, April, 1965 (London: Oxford University Press, 1968) pp. 423-4.

64Ayandele, p. 132.

65Mbiti, African Religions, p. 231; also Ayandele, p. 136.

66Bolaji Idowu, "Predicament," p. 426.

67J.V. Taylor and D.A. Lehmann, Christians of the Copperbelt (London: S.C.M. Press, 1961) p. 272f.

68Mbiti, African Religions, p. 232.

69Marioghae and Ferguson, p. 43.

70Mbiti, African Religions, p. 234.

71Ajayi, p. 163; see also the whole of Chapter 5, titled "Civilization Around the Mission House."

72Idowu, "Predicament," p. 424; also Ayandele, p. 290.

73Idowu, "Predicament," p. 433; see also pp. 32-35 below of this chapter.

74Baeta, p. 16.

75Idowu, "Predicament," p. 426.

76Mbiti, African Religions, p. 232; Idowu describes the emerging theology as "prefabricated theology." See Idowu, "Predicament," p. 426.

77Mbiti, African Religions, p. 233.

78Walker, p. 20.

79Burns, p. 74.

80Ajayi, p. 74.

81Ayandele, p. 285.

82J.B. Webster, The African Churches Among the Yoruba 1888-1922 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) p. 2.

83Ayandele, pp. 288-9; also Marioghae and Ferguson, pp. 34-6.

84It should be mentioned here that education played a significant function among the divided missionaries. It played a unifying function. As the respective and "divided" missionary bodies embarked upon founding schools, they realised the necessity of coming together to establish and organise these institutions, either as theological institutions to produce the church's personnel or other educational institutions to cater for the general literacy of the communities in which they existed. This opportunity of coming together--they seized and it did work.

85Ajayi, pp. 158-9.

86Ayandele, p. 343.

87Mbiti, African Religions, p. 75.

88Michael Singleton, "Spirits and Spiritual Direction: The Pastoral Counselling of the Possessed," Missiology 5:2 (April 1977) 190.

89See pages 18-19 above, of this work.

900.U. Kalu, ed., The History of Christianity in West Africa (London: Longman, 1980) pp. 266ff; also Baeta, pp. 13-18.

91Ayandele, pp. 241ff; 330-1.

92E. Bolaji Idowu, op. cit., p. 209; also J. Omosade Awolalu, op. cit., p. 191.

93John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy, op. cit., p. 238.

CHAPTER III

THE ART OF HEALING IN NIGERIAN TRADITIONAL CULTURE

THE CONCEPT OF HEALING AND WHOLENESS TO THE NIGERIAN

It might be necessary from the onset to state that in traditional Nigeria, the general concept of sickness, healing and wholeness is closely related to their origins, a point which will soon be dealt with.

The Nigerian concept of health and disease like most other Africans is symptomatic of the correct relationship between an individual and his or her environment: both the spiritual and physical environment. Healing and wholeness therefore to the traditional Nigeria is viewed in relation to that which is good, uncontaminated; beautiful, indeed all that is positively valued in life. For example an Ondo man or woman wishing to describe either a beautiful material or a state of goodness will use the same phrase "Ó Sọn" meaning it is good, it is beautiful, which most other Yoruba will literally interpret as "it is healthy."

ORIGINS OF SICKNESS OR ILLNESS

Terence Ranger has rightly revealed in his studies of some African communities that according to their conceptions and approaches to health and sickness, sufferings are usually categorised into two main sources. One of these divisions is the "diseases of God," while the other is the "diseases of Man."¹ The earlier, diseases of God, consists of illnesses and poor conditions, which are seen as tolerable,

"natural," and within the design of the Creator.² These could not easily be avoided; nor could any specific explanation be provided for them. Such misfortunes and problems he reports were within the control of secular herbal medicines. The latter group of diseases, the "diseases of Man" are those caused by agents of the devil, or the devil himself. These do not occur by divine sanction and will, but rather the handiwork of "wickedness and malevolence," malice of "sorcerers or witches" sufferings consequential to wrong doings to the departed ancestors and to the "law of the land." These diseases are seldom treated by ordinary or secular herbal medicines, but often by spiritual means, since they originated more from the (spiritual) realm.³

For the purposes of clarification and easy identification the writer has classified the origins of sicknesses by a traditional Nigerian into three main sources, Physical, Psychical and "Pneumatic" (Spiritual).

Physical.

This to the traditional Nigerian is the visible or natural origin for sickness and illness. This factor will include God as the originator and controller of the nature of the sickness and infact of being in total control of the whole situation. Though Nigerians believe that there are other major causes of misfortunes and problems, such as magic, sorcery; witchcraft, it is common to find that they attribute some of their problems such as epidemics, holocaust; drought, locust invasions, wars, floods, and other national calamities beyond individual human cause and control, to God.⁴ When God is brought into the situation of the cause of misfortune, it is often regarded as He

punishing men for their misbehaviour.

Offenses against one's neighbour, against the ancestors, or against the deities are in the final analysis offenses against God, since God is believed to have instituted the society with its ancestors and the nature spirits. Direct sin against God is vaguely defined, and in most cases it is one of the major deities that is said to be offended.⁵

Says another scholar:

On the whole, God is not blamed for calamities, misfortunes and sorrows which strike man. He is brought into the picture primarily as an attempt to explain what is otherwise difficult for the human mind; an explanation which also serves to comfort those struck by the particular form of suffering.⁶

Psychical.

This is another cause of sickness and misfortune, by the traditional Yoruba, and it is partially related to the above. It deals with the conduct of the sufferer. For example in the ritual of worship, the traditional priest or other devotees approaches his assignment and duty with all reverence. They are ever meticulous of all steps and procedures to be observed, realising that any mistake or miscalculation on their part nullifies the whole service and endangers their own lives also.⁷

an ontological balance must be maintained between God and man, the spirits and man, the departed and the livings. When this balance is upset, people will experience misfortunes and sufferings, or fear that these will strike them. The making of sacrifices and offerings on the other hand, is also a psychological device to restore this ontological balance.⁸

In this regard, one can therefore speak of

Offenses Against the Spiritual Powers. A person may be guilty of an offense against some spiritual beings by touching anything,

consecrated to their use. The unpredictable nature of spirits makes offences against them difficult to comprehend. It is only after the diviner or medicine man has pronounced the fact that the sufferer has wronged the spirit that the person can identify the cause of his problems.

Offence Against the Ancestors. When neglected by their kith and kin their survivors, the ancestors spirits are offended. The ancestor spirits also take offence when they are forgotten; when a breach or violation of trust made when they were living occurs, or when a member of their family neglects his duty not only to them but also to other members of their family.

Offence Against the Deities. This includes failure and carelessness to observe the regulations that relate to the divinities or the nature spirits; sacrilegious misdemeanours and profane acts, such as treading on their sacred grounds, or stealing fruits from any farm or orchard under their protection. Someone may sin against the divinities by failing to remain faithful to the oath sworn in their name. For example among Yoruba, Ewò is a comprehensive term which is also used when there is the transgression of a ritual law. Jẹ ewò, literally means "to eat" the taboo, that is, break the taboo by committing sin which includes committing adultery or physical abuse against one's parent or violating the terms of a covenant.⁹

"Pneumatic" (Spiritual).

This is the third major explanation as to the cause or origin of sickness or misfortune among traditional Nigerians. Diseases and

problems in this regard, are said to originate from the machinations and activities of enemies, sorcerers, witches or spirits. The pneumatic source of problems is the most popular and probably the most widespread. When a physical or psychical reason is adduced as the cause of an illness or problem, a spiritual reason is usually provided either as the underlying, or the underlining, the remote or the immediate cause.

The traditional Nigerian does not distinguish between diseases of physical and mental nature. A disease may have an obvious natural cause, but it must have a spiritual cause too.¹⁰

Witches. Many scholars and writers including the current writer all agree that the subject of witchcraft, sorcery and spirit-possession is a serious and genuine preoccupation of Nigerians as well as other African peoples. Says Mbiti:

To my knowledge, there is no African society which does not hold belief in mystical power of one type or another. It shows itself or it is experienced, in many ways.¹¹

Concerning witches, either in the specific or general understanding of the word Mbiti continues:

Whatever reality there is concerning witchcraft in the broad and popular sense of the term, the belief in it is there in every African village, and that belief affects everyone, for the better or for worse. It is part of the religious corpus of belief.¹²

Idowu similarly states that:

One important human spirit with which Africa has had to reckon very painfully, very disastrously, is the spirit of the witches. In Africa, it is idle to begin with the question whether witches exist or not. The observer from elsewhere outside African culture may hold whatever theory appeals to him on the subject. To Africans of every category, witchcraft is an urgent reality.¹³

A general survey reveals that African belief in witchcraft, sorcery and spirit-possession, presupposes a recognition of the dual

nature of man, as body and spirit.¹⁴ On the whole it is the personality soul which is believed to engage in witching activity in a metaphysical world (although the activities of witches are also believed to be carried out on the physical plane).

Parrinder, in his book Witchcraft records a comprehensive view of what Africans from different communities of the continent consider what the phenomenon to be.¹⁵ The general belief is that witches metamorphose into creatures, like vampires, bats and owls, and fly at night to suck the blood of their victims, or into other animals such as grass cutters and goats to destroy the crops of their enemies. Sometimes dogs, leopards, hyena and other ferocious animals are the familiars through which the enemy is attacked. Among the Urhobo of the Niger Delta, Nigeria, it is believed that witches can visit the house of an enemy and carry him physically away to a remote location (a bad bush); that they are able to summon a man's essence or double (Erhi) while he is asleep and discuss with him to know the person's thoughts about them, that witches communicate with each other over long distances (through telepathy?) and that any illness caused by a witch usually defies diagnosis by a Western trained doctor. The Yoruba widely attribute witches (àjé) with varied spiritual destructive actions, and are almost the only element of total evil in the traditional "theology" of the Yoruba.¹⁶

Psychiatric problems are often culturally interpreted as the attacks of witches, and people, especially old women, sometimes become convinced that they are witches. In Africa, it is usually thought that witches are women, especially crones and barren women, although a few men, who should properly be called wizards, are believed to be in the

society. Parrinder says:

Women are the most prone to suspicion of witchcraft. In some parts of Africa all witches are believed to be female, and in others the most dangerous are. The male role is to combat witchcraft, and keep women in subjection. A female doctor is a great rarity.¹⁷

While on the whole witches are conscious of the havoc they perpetrate usually to the essence of man (the epheral person) which results in a malaise and a wasting away of the physical body and subsequent death of the victim, there seems to be those who are ignorant of the fact that they are witches, and that they are causing harm to their neighbours, their dearest in sleep.¹⁸

Evil-Eye. Apart from the phenomenon of unconscious witches it is being thought that a malignant person with "an evil eye" and mind can inflict harm to a person he hates by being malevolent towards him. A person may be bewitched either because he deliberately or inadvertently offended a witch, or merely because of his prosperity which has made him an object of envy in the eyes of a witch.¹⁹

AGENTS OF HEALING (PRACTITIONERS)

The most important and significant personalities to a traditional Nigerian during his period of illness; pain; trouble or suffering are first, the members of his own family (nuclear and extended, in that order); the compound elders, and the helpers in the clan and secondly the practitioners or the professionals, and these are the medicine-man; the herbalists, witch-doctors, the priests, diviners, the mediums, and the interpreters at the oracles and shrines. Mbiti refers to these (the second group) as specialists.²⁰ It should be properly noted that in traditional African life, the roles functions and

services of these practitioners or personalities, be they priests, diviners, medicine-men, kings, elders, and sometimes interpreters, do overlap and take over each other, according to need and specific situations.

The professions of the specialists are not clearly differentiated, so that a medicine man may also be a diviner and administer herbal treatments. The priest may be a medium, a diviner, a counselor and also a household or clan head.²¹

Medicine-Man (Oníṣẹ̀gùn = Yoruba).

Among Africans, the medicine-man is an exceptional gift and a very useful source of assistance. He is also referred to as an "herbalist," or a "traditional doctor." The Western and European writers, including their missionaries call them 'witch-doctors.' The term could be appropriate only if what they do is mainly to heal victims of witchcraft, but this is just one of their functions.²² Most African villages have medicine-men within their reach, and they are popular as the friend of their respective communities. The medicine-men are readily accessible and feature in most of the activities of the societies. Any male member of the African society can be a medicine-man, after undergoing the proper training, which is either formal or informal.

The many and variegated functions of medicine-men are: healing of diseases and misfortune, either through psychological or physical procedures. In this regard, he first finds out the cause of the illness, and who the wrongdoer or evil agent (person) is; then he diagnoses the nature of the sickness, provides or applies the proper treatment, and offers a means of preventing a future occurrence. As the

medicine-man applies both physical and psychological (or spiritual) remedies he is assuring the patient that all is and will be well. Mbiti believes that:

Some of the activities involved in dealing with illness may not have any overt value, but they are psychologically vital and no doubt play a great role in healing the sick or helping the sufferer. In this case, the means are less important than the end, and that is how both the medicine-man and his patient see and experience the situation which brings them together.

On the whole, the medicine-man gives much time and personal attention to the patient, which enables him to penetrate deep into the psychological state of the patient.²³

Other functions of medicine-men include diagnosing and providing causes, offering cures and treatment, and prevention of diseases and sufferings, such as barrenness, failure in undertakings, misfortunes, poor crop yield in the field; magic, witchcraft, sorcery how to combat (or even manipulate) them; the nature and handling of spirits and the living-dead and the revelation of secrets to people. Owing to all these, medicine-men epitomize the hopes and aspirations of the society. They are ready to purge and cleanse the society when there is any contamination. Like many other observers, Mbiti sees them as "friends, pastors, [religious leaders], psychiatrists and doctors of traditional African villages and communities."²⁴

Diviner (Babaláwo = Yoruba) and Medium.

Diviners and mediums by their special calling, and training perform duties that fall within the category of priests and medicine-men. Theoretically their specialty is dealing with and linking living people with the living-dead and the spirits.²⁵

Diviner. Among the Yoruba, the diviner, (babaláwo) is an important traditional healer.²⁶ He is also a priest of the Òrúnmìlà, the oracle divinity.²⁷ In Yoruba religion, Òrúnmìlà is the Deity's (God's) deputy (divinity) in charge of "omniscience and wisdom."²⁸ The Babaláwo, (a diviner) therefore is usually referred to as "the father of mysteries."²⁹ The Hausa call a diviner mai duba which literally means "the seer" or "someone who sees," while Mbiti describes one as an agent of "unveiling mysteries of human life."³⁰

As their name indicates, their main occupation is acts of divination, and in most cases this is accomplished within the context of the medical and priestly functions. They perform their duties by using mediums, oracles, spirit-possession; divination materials, such as Ifa among the Yoruba;³¹ common sense; intuitive knowledge and insight; hypnotism and other secret knowledge. Uchendu says that they operate as a network of secret intelligence, and are always up to date with the latest news of the latest gossips,³² "so that they have a working knowledge which they use in their divination."³³ They are expected to earn and maintain their respect, stature and dignity, in their respective communities. People (enquirers) consult them for both private and public matters. Diviners like other traditional healing functionaries are friends of the society; and they function as counselors, judges, "comforters" revealers of secrets like thefts, imminent danger or unforeseen incidents. Stressing the place of divination and its related functionaries among the Yoruba (as it is among some Nigerians) Idowu says:

It seems absolutely impossible for a Yoruba whose soul is still fettered to his traditional belief to attempt anything at all without consulting the oracle by Ifá. It has always been

throughout the history of the Yoruba a sine qua non to life. Before a betrothal, before a marriage, before a child is born, at the birth of a child, at successive stages in man's life, before a king is appointed, before a chief is made, before anyone is appointed to a civic office, before a journey is made, in times of crisis, in times of sickness, at any and all times, Ifá is consulted for guidance and assurance. As the saying goes, *òní l'a rí a ò r' ọla òn nibaba' láwò ẹ̀e nd' Ífá l' ọ̀rọ̀rún*--"It is today we see, we do not see tomorrow, hence the babalawo consults the oracle every fifth day."³⁴

Mediums. Mediums function in manners similar to that of diviners, for example as priestly personnel serving at the shrines of each divinity. They reveal to the enquirer and client, the will and dictates of the divinity, (*òrìṣà*) that is being consulted.³⁵ Mediums like their medical counterparts do have and practice medicine. In fact, mediumships is one of their main treatment methods. Some of the mediums are women.³⁶ These are females who have advanced in age, reached their menopause; and also ceased from sexual intercourse.³⁷ Some virgins also serve as mediums.³⁸ Some scholars write that mediums are specialists,³⁹ called to the profession while other scholars like Mbiti, think that they "function in this role only when "possessed" by a spirit, otherwise they are "normal" people without specialized abilities."⁴⁰

Mediums are consulted by suppliants and enquirers seeking information about various problems, illnesses, family and matrimonial issues; future; lost or stolen goods, death, barrenness, ill-luck and many other matters, personal, private or public. Mediums often speak with authority thereby making their utterances acceptable, and this they do in tones that are unintelligible but to the interpreter. They sometimes prophesy and offer spiritual explanations for strange events, misfortunes and national calamities for example epidemics.⁴¹

Priest (Olóríṣà = Yoruba).

Since Nigerian traditional healing is part of its traditional religion, it is proper that another major group of traditional healers now to be studied, be the traditional priests, as their calling, and training customarily dictates.

Writing on the mystical and spiritual needs of Africans, and the importance of priests in this regard, Mbiti says:

In African villages, disease and misfortune are religious experiences, and it [they] require[s] a religious approach to deal with them.⁴²

Idowu writes that:

The priest has always been an important social figure. He is inevitable in the social pattern of the Yoruba since the keynote of their national life is their religion. Virtually nothing is done without the ministration of the priest. For, apart from looking after the "soul" of the community, he features prominently in the installation of kings and the making of chiefs."⁴³

Priests are normally religious ministers serving in temples; but in African societies the connotation and function of the position ranges from temples, shrines, sacred groves and other places. Ilogu for example writes about a category of priests in Ibo religion. This is a group of "men who became Priests through 'appointment' by ancestral spirits."⁴⁴ After their training, they discharge three functions. First the role of the medicine men versed in healing herbs; second, divination and third, sacrificing.⁴⁵ Their duties also include exorcism, preparation of medicines to drive away evil; for protection from harms like car accidents, and for enhancing prosperity in business, farming or hunting.⁴⁶

Like other tribal functionaries, the priest in African

traditional society, dispenses mainly with religious obligations, as well as other communal responsibilities, since religion is closely interwoven with other aspects of life of the African peoples. The priest is therefore the spiritual and ceremonial leader of the community.⁴⁷ He officiates at sacrifices, offerings and ceremonies relating to his knowledge. Sometimes he acts as a medium, or uses the services of a medium in the course of his ministry. Priests function as the consultants and authorities (depositories) of national customs, knowledge, taboos, theology and oral history. Owing to their wealth of knowledge and experience, African traditional priests perform the roles of political leaders, judges and ritual experts. They intercede with God on behalf of individuals and communities and lead in fertility and rainmaking festivals and rituals.

Priests in African traditional societies are a distinct and a disciplined group of men and women. They enter the profession voluntarily or by appointment.⁴⁸ Each priest is distinguishable from the other by the marks he bears which also describe the divinity to which he is devoted. Priests have codes of ethics which have to be strictly followed. Idowu for example reports that:

In every case, a demand is laid upon the priest who is entering upon his sacred office to be sexually clean. That is why the priest should be a person of advanced age and the priestess a person past childbearing and sexual habits. A married priest must be properly washed with water (often with a concoction of herbs) and antiseptic soap before going into the presence of the divinity. Menstruating women are banned from the shrines.⁴⁹

PROCEDURES FOR HEALING

Sacrifices.

To a Yoruba, a Nigerian, an African or any religious adherent sacrifice is an important, necessary and indispensable form of going about his faith. "Sacrifices and offerings, [says Mbiti] constitute one of the commonest acts of worship."⁵⁰ Sometimes these two words are interchangeably used to mean the same thing.

Importance and Significance. A great underlying importance and significance of sacrifice is that it is one of the main avenues available to man in maintaining communication with the Deity. Ìdòwú says that:

It is man's best way of maintaining an established relationship between himself and his object of worship. What is offered and how it is offered depends upon the nature of the particular cult as well as the occasion of the sacrifice.⁵¹

Discussing its symbolic and sacramental significance, Arinze says that a sacrifice is an offering of a sensible thing to show the interior sentiments of religion.⁵² To him, "external sacrifice is essentially a sign [a symbol], a sacrament, or an expression of the interior sacrifice."⁵³

Raymond Prince observes that sacrifice is the cornerstone of Yoruba therapy.⁵⁴ This fact is also true of many other Nigerian communities. Gotoṃ informs us about some tribes of the Benue Plateau state who make ritual offerings at road junctions outside the village, thereby symbolically sending away the disturbance and disease.⁵⁵ Sometimes a whole community may sacrifice animals (in the olden days,

human beings) to ward off calamities and epidemic diseases.⁵⁶ In other areas, sacrifices of goats, chickens, bulls, and offerings of foodstuffs are often made at the prescription of the diviner in addition to medicinal and herbal treatment. Sacrifices or offerings or both void of medicinal or herbal prescriptions could sometimes be the only form of treatment usually in instances where the diagnosed problem is that of known guilt.⁵⁷ Mbiti, as mentioned earlier observes that:

an ontological balance must be maintained between God and man, the spirits and man, the departed and the living. When this balance is upset, people experience misfortunes and sufferings, or fear that these will strike them. The making of sacrifices and offerings on the other hand, is also a psychological device to restore this ontological balance. It is also an act of and occasion of making and renewing contact between God and man, the spirits and man, i.e. the spiritual and the physical worlds.⁵⁸

Sacrifices are important for the communal (fellowship) roles they play among living members of the society as well as between the living and the departed (the living-dead). In the latter case, it indicates that the departed are still part of their surviving families. Such acts also demonstrate respect, reverence and remembrance for the departed souls. While some traditional African households and families offer sacrifices and offerings through the departed, larger communities perform theirs through the divinities. To the Nigerian as well as the African, God is the ultimate recipient of the sacrifices or offerings. Since he is the Creator, Preserver, and Last End. It is indeed to Him alone that sacrifices, offerings, and prayers are directed.⁵⁹

Other significance and importance of sacrifice according to Arinze are:⁶⁰

Adoration of the Deity by man. Here man acknowledges God's supremacy, and cominion; also His excellence. The created therefore responds either spontaneously or consciously in the worship of the Creator, saying in diverse ways: "How Great Thou Art!" Similar to the environment which might have prompted the psalmist to say in an outburst, "O Lord, our Lord how majestic is thy name . . . " (Ps. 8).

Thanksgiving:--for the benefits and innumerable blessings received from God.

Propitiation:--craving pardon and forgiveness for sins and misgivings committed.

Impetration:--mainly in anticipation and expectation of meeting felt needs to be fulfilled by the Deity.

While the adoration and thanksgiving are rendered ("go up") to God; propitiation and impetration express assistance and needs from God. Adoration, however, is the constant element.⁶¹ In some Nigerian societies, for example the Ibo, the ultimate aim of sacrifice is to appease "the higher powers," and to request for some needs, hence as Arinze concludes, "utilitarian in motive."⁶²

Only trained personnel--priests, medicine men,--; those customarily known to officiate such as, kings, elders; and other people appointed for the particular sacrifice can only officiate. "The offerer," writes Arinze, must be "the proper person."⁶³

Types of Sacrifices.

Meal and Drink Offerings. This is similar to the form recently mentioned regarding the communal significance of sacrifices.⁶⁴ One of

the chief aims of this type of sacrifice is fellowship, between the divinity and its worshippers (who are regarded as his children).⁶⁵ This type is also intended to achieve fellowship among the living (worshippers) themselves. The occasion for such a sacrifice is usually that of rejoicing, when the departed are remembered. At this occasion the living intend to express their love; respect, reverence for the departed. Such ceremonies also demonstrate that the departed ones, are still part of the surviving family, implying that death is not the end. Meal and drink offerings are either observed daily or occasionally depending on the cult of the worshippers.

Gift or Thank Offering. Most Nigerian peoples are open-handed and so are always willing and cheerful to give and to donate part of what they have to others. This character is carried into their religion. They therefore offer things to the divinities as gifts.

Offerings are also made to the divinities in appreciation for many benefits and abundant blessings received. For prayers answered--after requests for children;⁶⁶ prosperity at home; work; good harvest; attainment of social⁶⁷ or professional status and for many other personal or public concerns. It is a very grievous sin to be ungrateful. There are many proverbs and sayings among Nigerians warning people against such an unbecoming behaviour. The Ibo for example say, "When a sufferer is healed of his diseases he forgets those who helped him." Another Yoruba proverb regarding gratitude is: "If someone expresses appreciation for a benefit received, he ensures a similar benevolence in the future."

Votive. Suppliants approach their divinities for some special favour and needs. They promise to offer something in return if the wishes are granted.⁶⁸ Sometimes the devotee sets a limit to expedite his requests. Failure for the devotee to fulfill his own obligation after his requests must have been provided is not lightly looked upon.⁶⁹

Propitiation. The Yoruba call this Ebo Ètùtù that is, "sacrifice of appeasement." Such sacrifice is made in obeying an oracle's prescription in order to avert a catastrophic situation, such as epidemic drought, famine; serious illness. Sometimes the activity involves individuals or the entire community.⁷⁰

Substitution. It is believed by some Nigerian tribes that some rascally minded spirits enter the wombs of pregnant women and when the former are delivered as babies torment the mother and family by falling ill with an undiagnosed sickness which results into death at a very early age. The malignant spirits are believed to be working in league where they fix dates for returning to the clique after perpetrating their mischief in the physical world. A diviner or healer may prescribe a sacrifice to prevent or stop such a mischief following a proper investigation. The agreement made by the spirit would be altered and the offering would replace it in the spirit world.⁷¹ Similarly a sacrifice would be offered to save someone under a spell and being haunted for death by evil spirits. The offering for example of sheep and other materials would adequately replace the human being from the entanglement of the spirits.⁷²

Preventive. Almost identical to propitiatory sacrifice described above, this form has as its main motive precaution and prevention. It is either public or private, and observed when any problem seems to be threatening the subjects. Sacrifices offered according to the directives of the oracle are made to prevent the disaster as well as to protect the people from any harm.⁷³

Foundation. According to Idowu, this form combines the nature of propitiation and preventive.⁷⁴ But this writer sees it mainly as preventive. The occasion for this type is when a house or building is to be erected. The oracle when consulted prescribes what should be done. It is usually a sacrifice. In the olden days human beings are offered but in the contemporary world, the offerings are animals. When the ritual is done, it is expected that the building will be trouble free.

Prayers.

All Nigerians, like all other African peoples do pray. To them like other worshippers, prayer is the most common form of worship.⁷⁵ Prayer is also a principal means of communicating with God.

Idowu writes about the Yoruba (and true of most Nigerians) that:

Prayers are offered, not only at worship, but also at any time and in any place as the worshipper feels or occasion demands. People often stop on their way at shrines to offer brief prayers; or they may speak their prayers in intimate ways to their divinity, whom they believe to be ever present though unseen, as they walk along the road or as they are engaged in their work. Usually, women are the more religious ones who are more frequently caught in this practice by wayside shrines, sacred trees, sacred brooks, at cross-roads, or at any other places marked with some sacred signs, asking for a blessing on their journey, their work, their wares,

their family, or their private undertakings. Ejaculatory prayers at all times form part and parcel of the common life of the Yoruba.⁷⁶

Though as Idowu earlier stated, that the focus and major character of prayers to the Yoruba [and to some Nigerians] is the petitionary aspect, prayer to these people means more than:

the awareness of threat and a cry for help, help that is within the reach of every individual, the appeal to God.⁷⁷

To Nigerians prayer is essentially an expression of the self to the Deity, at different situations, and for various occasions in life, ranging from request for material and spiritual blessings, protection; healing; and victory to thanksgiving (gratitude) adoration; praise, joy, and dedication.⁷⁸ Most prayers are short, impromptu; and to the point. There are long and more formal prayers too.

Who Prays and to Whom? All Nigerians do pray including the young ones who join their respective communities when they assemble for worship. Most prayers are rendered by the officiating personnel, as dictated by the specific situation and occasion. As earlier mentioned these officiants include, priests, diviners, medicine-men, kings, ritual and family elders, heads of households, heads of social or professional groups for example, hunters, and other appointees.⁷⁹ The different aspects of prayer are offered to the spiritual realities of which Africans are very much aware. These include God, the Spirits, and the Divinities.

The Deity (God). Knowing and acknowledging God as Father and Creator, He is first and foremost approached and about 90 percent of the prayers are addressed to Him.⁸⁰ Nigerians believe that healing and

other benefits derive from the Deity, therefore prayers, sacrifices and offerings are made to God on behalf of the sick, the barren; the troubled; and the needy.

When healing comes it is often attributed to God, even if medical agents may play a part in the healing process. God is thanked, or His help is otherwise acknowledged.

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Thus God [the Deity] is involved in the affairs of mankind, and people experience this involvement in terms of His continuing to create, sustain, provide, pastor, nurse, heal and save. Most of this functions on the physical and concrete level of being, and with special reference to the life of man.⁸¹

To the Spirits. Nigerians as well as Africans are ever much conscious and aware of the spiritual world which exist within their world. To these peoples, the spiritual universe is closely knit and indivisible from the physical. In the spiritual realm, the Deity (God) is first in Hierarchical consideration, next are the divinities generally identified as the associates of the Deity; finally are the common "spiritual beings beneath the status of divinities and above the station of men."⁸² It is with this last category that we are now concerned.

In many African societies, these spirits are believed to have more power than men;⁸³ and that they function as "intermediaries who convey human sacrifices or prayers to God."⁸⁴ African peoples therefore address them in their meditations, sacrificial rites and prayers. The innumerable spirits include the dead ancestors, members of the family (often referred to as the living-dead). Others are Spirits of the grandparents, spirits of deceased parents, spouses, children and other relatives.⁸⁵

Nigerians approach these spirits (super-humans) for variety of needs and assistance ranging from protection over individuals, the family as a whole, to healing for a sick person; at situations of distress. Sacrifices sometimes do accompany the prayers, either to placate the spirits, (who might have been offended as a result of neglect and proper attention given to them), or to perpetuate their memory among the living. Attaining the position of a spirit is often regarded as a social elevation. For this and other reasons, Africans accord due respect and regard for their departed ancestors; the living-dead; and other important spirits.⁸⁶

To the Divinities. The divinities are the second group in the hierarchical arrangement, with their position between the Deity and the spirits.⁸⁷ Divinities are believed to have been created by the Deity.⁸⁸ Idowu refers to them as

. . . the ministers of Olodumare [the Deity], looking after the affairs of His universe and acting as intermediaries between Him and the world of men. To each of them is assigned a department over which he is ruler and governor.⁸⁹

Some of the divinities are said to be national heroes who have become deified. To many Nigerians, these divinities are real and therefore often conceived and thought of. This suggests the reason why these category of spirits feature in their prayers.

Purposes of Prayer.

Life. By praying for life, Nigerians are requesting for the multiplicity of life through procreation. The suppliant is only requesting that he or she be spared with good health, longevity, and to

have many children, of his or her own. The importance and value of children to Africans are legitimately numerous. This is expressed in their customs, practices, traditions, sayings, the names they give to their offspring, and how they care for and bring up the younger ones.

To Nigerians as well as Africans, children will perpetuate the family line; they are "the buds of the society."⁹⁰ The subject of 'birth and marriage' in African societies important and interesting as it is cannot be properly considered here owing to the provisions of this project. This subject is being well handled by sociologists and other scholars.⁹¹ It would be sufficient here to state that among Africans,

A child not only continues the physical line of life, being in some societies thought to be a re-incarnation of the departed, but becomes the intensely religious focus of keeping the parents in their state of immortality.⁹²

In African societies, it is the children that create parents and who cement a lasting marriage. Gotom writes that:

The importance of children in Gikuyu marriage is like that of many Nigerians. Marriage "is based on mutual love and gratification of the sexual instinct" of the married couple, but sexual gratification is not enough. It is expected of a marriage to produce children.

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The life of a barren wife is a sad one in the Nigerian family and sadder if the family is polygynous. [She] would not only be taunted but would also be the culprit designated for the explanation of any misfortune that happened to her co-wives and their children. [She] is stagnated, and Lambo says she experiences much mental stress for that.⁹³

The above out of many others expresses the significance and importance of the prayer for life among Nigerians and Africans as well. People pray to live in peace and harmony; for the choice of a good marriage partner; good married life; have many children, and live to see their grand-, and great-grandchildren.

It is an extremely painful tragedy in African societies for one to die without bearing children (by one's own biological faculties or through socio-religious arrangements). Therefore whoever has power over the lives of others, whether he be the chief, king, a divinity or God himself, is requested in the sentiments of prayer, to allow one to reproduce in plenty.⁹⁴

Health and Healing. This form of request has a strong relationship to the one just discussed. Prayers in this group are usually made at desperate moments; at crisis situations, which if not adequately handled may lead to death. In such situations, man is in his weakest moments, he becomes humble by the circumstances and before whom he needs help. The sufferer in desperation seeks for all available means of succor including God, the spirits; and the divinities.

In pursuit of healing and wholeness, the disturbed man approaches the medical professional, a medicine-man or priest who as part of the treatment offers a prayer:

God help this man that he may be well;
 that he may recover tomorrow,
 And you may want to help this man to be well,
 and as overcoming you overcame,
 Overcome all these troubles.
 And have mercy on me,
 because we do not know how to pray to Murungu [God]
 differently from what we say now.⁹⁵

In the course of their ministry many traditional healers have as their philosophy: "We [humans] care, God heals." They ascribe all their powers, skills, knowledge and medicines including the success of their efforts to the Deity. While most of them include prayers as part of their healing procedure; others do make sacrifices and offerings to facilitate the treatment provided. Gotom observes that "Prayers are offered to God before every major healing starts."⁹⁶ Another African prayer for recovery from spirit sickness reads:

See, if you have made this child sick;
 See the goat you always receive;
 See, I have lighted a fire for you;
 See your child;
 Let him be healed so that he may care for your things;
 Let our home be peaceful.⁹⁷

Wealth and Prosperity. This type of prayers is directed to the personal needs of the suppliant. The ultimate goal here is "a balanced prosperity for a family."⁹⁸ The suppliant asks for animal wealth, to supply his purchasing ability; social entertainment; to fulfill his religious commitments (sacrifices and offerings) and provide marriage requirements. If they are hunters, here is another opportunity to ask for good game.

In this context, African people pray for the needs, practically demonstrating that human abilities are limited and so they must rely upon God for their needs. While they realise the necessity for hard work they ask for material blessings from the Deity and the spirits as an indication of favour from them. Once granted they offer prayers of thanks, and express their gratitude by sharing their prosperity with God and the departed through sacrifices and other offerings.

For Livelihood and Various Occupations. Many people in the traditional African society are farmers. The agricultural season starts with sowing and ends with harvesting.

Farmers in humility and confidence pray to the Deity and the living-dead and while declaring their inadequacies they ask for help in their endeavours. They ask for blessing on the seeds; the tools; for abundant rain; and they the workers.⁹⁹ Prayers are made before a journey commences, with requests for safety, protection and success for the enterprises at hand. African peoples believe that

Death does not come to him for whom prayer is made; death only comes to him who trusts in his own strength.¹⁰⁰

War and Adversity. According to Mbiti, "throughout the world, man assumes that when he is at war, God is on his side and will grant him victory."¹⁰¹ The aims of prayer during these situations include victory, safe return for the soldiers from war; physical and spiritual support from the difficulties arising from war. The community prays for security, courage and deliverance.

Hunger, famine, anguish including sorrows resulting from bereavement constitute emergency situations which are confronted by prayer.

In these prayers about war and adversity, we see man at one of his weakest points of existence. His own powers have reached the nadir, and his only hope of survival is God or in some few cases, other spiritual help.¹⁰²

Life's Transition (from womb to grave and after-life). I have earlier discussed the significance of having children to the African.¹⁰³ A considerable amount of concern is attached to procreation and offspring. For example:

a son [writes Mbiti] is extremely important. It is the son who, in patrilineal societies, carries on the biological line of his forefathers. The son should be present at and normally presides over the family rituals. It is the son who sets up a new home. Therefore, the desire to beget a son is great for social, economic and religious reasons.¹⁰⁴

African peoples therefore pray to the Deity, to the spirits, and the living-dead for fertility (much more for a woman without children) and for the safe delivery of the baby. Relatives and midwives do pray for the success of the infant as he grows in the world; during the naming ceremony during initiation ceremonies involving circumcision (in

some societies, clitoridectomy) admission into adulthood and "secret-societies." Nigerians as well as Africans pray at the beginning of a girl's first menstruation; during marriage ceremonies--engagement through wedding--; at home (especially in the morning time); at death (sometimes a dying man prays, displaying courage, religiousity, and graciousness).¹⁰⁵ People pray during bereavements, crying that "the Deity has called too soon"; at the dedication of a burial ground; and for safe-journey of the dead to the life hereafter.

To the Spirits. The important subject of prayers in relation to African peoples have earlier been mentioned at different places in this project.¹⁰⁶ Prayer is one of the principal means through which Africans express themselves to the Spirits. Some include requests ranging from protection from evil; procreation and fertility; assistance in dire need; favour; appeal for offences committed; and sometimes when offerings and libations are made for the living dead. At this instance, the basis is fellowship, to remember the departed and as an expression of welcome or hospitality.¹⁰⁷

For Rain. African peoples regard rain as a symbol of life; epitomizing well-being for people, animals plants, and the created order. Rain is as important to life as health is to the body. Without rain, people are subjected to discomfort and starvation; ill-health which might lead to death.

Unlike healing and other needs when prayers are made on personal and family levels, the requests and rituals for rain are made on communal levels; since "there is nothing like a private supply of rain."¹⁰⁸ While rain and prosperity are synonymous, drought, famine,

and the abrupt cessation of rain is considered a punishment, or chastisement and disfavour from the Deity or the Spirits. Specialists are therefore consulted to help ease the disastrous situation, or return life to normalcy. The specialists in this regard are often referred to as rain-makers who do not actually make the rains, but influence its copious supply from the Deity, through rituals, accompanied by prayer. Mbiti rightly observes that: "In the provision of rain lies their chief experience of the love, providence, and care of God for all people."¹⁰⁹

Confidence, Confession and Creed. That man wants to pray to the Deity, and the various types of prayer in themselves are indicative of the fact that he has a belief and confidence and trust in Him. Because African peoples often receive replies to their supplications, they know that the Deity and the spirits listen to them and so are encouraged to call upon Him constantly.

Nigerians do pray to God for their personal and communal needs. They pray when they are joyful, happy; when they feel dejected, (sometimes they attribute their loneliness to the spirits forsaking them); at periods of national calamities and distress. The type of prayer in this section,

lifts the life of man from the level of despondence to the heights of spiritual confidence and faith in God. God remains true, loving, ever ready to forgive and help the people who are his children. Even when trouble arise, one faces them with an invincible confidence that God will "ever keep" one safe. The more one prays the stronger grows one's faith in the goodness of God.¹¹⁰

Praise, Joy and Thanksgiving. African peoples praise, adore and worship the Deity for whom and what He is and for what He means to them. They praise God for His greatness and His good works. Ingratitude and carelessness in appreciating a benevolent act, we have earlier mentioned

is greatly frowned upon.¹¹¹ Nigerians as well as Africans pray to God thanking and praising Him for mercies received; for all the benefits granted them--wives, wealth, wisdom--; and much more for rain. Prayers of thanksgiving are offered for prayers answered with the requests fulfilled.

Prayers of thanks, and gratitude are made with the suitable accompaniment--, drumming, dancing; joy, jubilation and rejoicing. Much of the expression of thanks is demonstrated in action rather than in words. These actions, include sacrifices and offerings. Mbiti suggests that this attitude explains the lack of many prayers of thanksgiving and prayers.¹¹²

Condemnation, Blessing and Peace. Curse is an indication of negativeness in African societies. Mbiti says "It is the ultimate expression of condemnation, disapproval, punishment and dissociation."¹¹³ He also sees the act as the worst form of punishment among Africans.¹¹⁴

Curses are pronounced over relatives, parents, aunts, uncles and children. In these situation, relationships between the parties are mostly distasteful. Curses sometimes are intended to strengthen good relationships; to cement a pact as in secret-societies;¹¹⁵ or used as an instrument of social control--against thieves, witches, and other mischievous elements in the community, who are greatly abhorred.

Blessings are always welcome, pleasing valued, and appreciated among Africans. Some rituals accompany this act, such as spitting on or towards the recipient, or sprinkling him or her with water. Blessings are usually pronounced from the senior to the subordinate, from kings, elders, priests, to the community or individuals; and parents or older

members of the society to the children or younger members of the same. Soldiers, and people going on a journey are usually blessed.

Peace, according to Mbiti, is "perhaps the crown of African spirituality."¹¹⁶ African peoples pray for this element of life, because they wish to spend their lives in tranquility. Peace is all that is good, including good health, recovery from sickness; trouble-free occupation; and abundant supply of rain with good harvest.

OTHER FORMS OF HEALING

Group and Family Therapy.

In Nigerian traditional society religion is intimately related with life and socialization. This phenomenon permeates itself in the lives of the people in innumerable ways.¹¹⁷ The family, the clans and tribes have always been responsible for transmitting and perpetuating the history and faith to succeeding generations, through the literary genres of, folklore, stories, proverbs, myths, legends and images. Religion has therefore been the concern of ancestral family and clan lineages. Since healing is part of the spiritual and religious life of the people, treatment and counseling of the sick, the disturbed and the distressed are often accomplished within the context of family or group. Someone often finds one, two or three elders working together as counselors to a group or family.

The social structure¹¹⁸ with its emphasis on togetherness under elders seems organized to facilitate care and to provide early action during emotional disturbances. The care of the community as a whole is guarded and jealously handled preventively in childhood, initiation, marriage and bereavement. As earlier mentioned, the origin of sickness

and illness is sought in the spirit forces and societal responsibility. Sometimes individuals, groups, or a community are held responsible for illnesses and misfortunes, often it is the spiritual forces, namely, witches, sorcerers, and other malignant forces.

The group at the bedside of a dying person, for example, is usually very supportive and caring.¹¹⁹ The task of preparing the body for burial is often carried out by the supportive relatives, neighbours and friends. The rituals and ceremonies that do accompany burials, are aimed at the welfare of the departing Spirit and the welfare of the surviving relatives and community.¹²⁰ After the dead is buried, friends and acquaintances return to the house to console the bereaved family and to provide some supportive needs. Groups of women, take turns to greet and console the chief mourners, and other members of the deceased's family. Weeping, crying, sighing, are usually the ways of expressing their sorrow, and sympathy. Crying for a dead relative is also considered as the last expression of affection and the love the survivors have for the deceased.¹²¹

Counseling.

In traditional Nigerian society, counseling is often combined with other professions. This function is dispensed by the healing personnel or specialists, such as medicine men; witch-doctors; herbalists, priests, diviners and mediums. Other people who perform this role are the parents; household elders, and relatives.

In African societies, the treatment of physical and mental illnesses is within the realm of religion. The people's understanding of a counselor is similar to a combination of the pastoral and

psychiatric profession in the Western and European societies. Torrey, for example, considers the witch doctors as the counterparts of psychiatrists in traditional societies.¹²² Though formal counseling and therapy are done by parents, elders, relatives, healers and priests, direct caring is usually provided by individual members of the family; village or clan for the fellow members. Traditional counseling and care is also achieved through social relations and interaction of the people in their various communities.

The life cycle, the social structure, the persons, the rites of passage and the customs governing socialization all have inbuilt mechanisms of therapeutic significance. It could be said that counseling and care in Nigerian society are unconsciously achieved through the significant persons in the society and through special events marking the stages of the life cycle.

Preparation of Herbs and Other Medicines.

The principal function of the diviner and some traditional medical personnel in Nigeria is to diagnose the the cause (mystical or otherwise) of a disease and trouble, and to prescribe a medical cure or spiritual remedy. The medicine recommended, and its administration are expected to deal with the illness. The dual expectation from the usage of medicine may lend credence to the fact that there is an unclear distinction between medicine and magic.¹²³ The common word for medicine and magic often found in many Nigerian languages indicates this double meaning. The Hausa word is magani; Yoruba = oògùn; Ibo = Ogwu; Nupe = Cigbe. Medicine and herbs are categorized into two main groups. "Good" for beneficial uses, and "evil" for anti-social uses. The notion that

there is a similarity between the act performed and the outcome expected governs the practice of traditional medicine¹²⁴.

The medicine being prescribed in the treatment of the patient could only be effective provided the healer and the client follow the exact procedure of the healing ritual as designed by the ancestors. The medicine also becomes potent through consecration done by invoking the help of the Deity; imploring the sanction of the Spirits, and that of the ancestors themselves.¹²⁵ The rituals and ceremony accompanying the dispensation of the medicine have the important function of strengthening the mind and ego of the patient.

Medicine in the form of amulets and charms is used in warding off misfortune and protection against attacks of witches and sorcerers. Potions of medicine power are kept in tiny leather bags by traditional healers. Babies, pregnant women and those who feel insecure in life carry protective charms around the waist or neck. The medicine may be very ordinary, but the potent words of blessing from the traditional healer may accomplish half of the healing envisaged. It is believed that most of the medicine used helps in intoning up the body and mind of the patient to resist illness and gain health.

The art of traditional medicine is often believed to be revealed to the medicine-men, including the herbalists, by the ancestor spirits of the practitioner's clan. Ilogu refers to this "class of greatly gifted in the knowledge of the use of herbs to cure various diseases" as dibia as distinct from priests.¹²⁶ There are others specifically trained and who like the former undergo some period of apprenticeship. At this stage all prospective herbalists or medicine men acquire knowledge in matters relating to:

. . . the medicinal value, quality and use of different herbs, leaves, roots, fruits, barks, grasses and various objects like minerals, dead insects, bones, feathers, powders, smoke from different objects, excreta of animals and insects, shells, eggs and so on; the causes, cures and prevention of diseases and other forms of suffering . . . 127

The medicine and treatment are generally administered by priests, diviners, medicine-men, herbalists, and witch doctors. Others are the parents, elders, and relatives of the patient. These people also function as the religious personalities of their various communities in Nigeria, as well as the continent of Africa.

The Main Weakness of the Traditional Mode of Healing.

Identifying the mystical cause only¹²⁸ and emphasizing the elimination of the spiritual nature of the problem, and neglecting the physical dimension and implications has resulted to many untimely deaths, since the medicine-men claims to heal the patient by "mystical" means; and not advising him on the simple but important precautions, including dietary habits; ecological factors such as good hygienic and sanitary conditions around him.

(Overdose). The strength and quantity of medicines administered to patients sometimes are too much and too strong, with the consequence that the treatment inflicts more harm than good to the client.

(Abuse of Professional Privilege). In a bid to be popular or acquire more gain, some medicine-men, deceive their clients by claiming that they can do almost anything from making the sick well to helping an ambitious person realise his dreams, materially or socially. They sometimes deceive students to helping them pass their exams, all these

probably with little or no effort on the part of the clients. These professional charlatans, practice their profession in a manner similar to the one described by Shakespeare in Macbeth: where some evil powers (the witches) were referred to as: "instruments of darkness [who] tell us [people] truths to betray us [people] in deepest consequences."

SUMMARY

In traditional Nigeria, the cause and treatment of disease is mainly sought and handled in the realm of the spiritual (mystical) forces and in the society. Although there are evidences of individual responsibility, this is often overshadowed by witchcraft accusations. Since both disease and salvation have their roots in the society, the individual finds it difficult sometimes to trust everyone. This suspicious behaviour cripples his life from full self actualization.

Traditional healers do work in groups and as individuals but often in the context of the group or community. The healers who are in touch with the spirit world approach their tasks in a multi-dimensional way: diagnosis of the mystical/spiritual cause, treatment of the spiritual cause, treatment of the physical cause and enhancing the ego of the patient by rituals which symbolically emancipate the patient from the trouble.

In the final analysis, most Nigerian people see the Deity as the great healer. For this, the individual puts his absolute trust in Him; confessing Him to be God and he or she just a creature to rely upon God. The traditional Nigerian like the African recognizes that a relationship between him or her and the Deity is possible, and that He responds to and respects that relationship whose ongoing existence, depends so much

on man himself. In Nigerian traditional healing, there is the strong notion of the miraculous. Its success has the undertone of a miracle brought about partly by the attitudes of the healer, the patient and other significant persons in the latter's life.

The above in essence are the traditional forms of healing in Nigeria; its proper understanding is expected to activate and facilitate the various facets of the healing ministry, particularly of the Nigerian Traditional Churches where such undertaking is greatly lacking.

NOTES

¹ Terence Ranger, "Medical Science and Pentecost: The Dilemma of Anglicanism in Africa," in W.J. Sheils (ed.) The Church and Healing: Papers Read at the Twentieth Summer Meeting and the Twenty-First Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982) p. 339.

² As I earlier wrote in chapter One (page 7) that this project is not intended as a theological treatise on the subject of healing, I am similarly reminding readers that the work is not a philosophical debate on the same issue. I shall only be concerned especially in this chapter in reporting the findings of my studies as expected. The basis of the rationale or the logic of the practices of the Nigerian people for performing one ritual or the other necessary for discussion as it may be will be not be made.

³ Ranger, p. 339.

⁴ John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (London: Heinemann, 1969) pp. 43-45.

⁵ Musa Dimka Gotom, "Towards an Indigenous Model for Pastoral Counseling and Care: Based on Some Socio-Cultural, Anthropological and Theological Presuppositions of Certain Nigerian Peoples" (Ph.D., School of Theology at Claremont, June, 1975) p. 98.

⁶ Mbiti, p. 45.

⁷ E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief (London: Longman, 1962) p. 9, also p. 108 ff.

⁸ Mbiti, p. 59.

⁹ Idowu, p. 149.

¹⁰ Gotom, p. 102. cp. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937) p. 67.

¹¹ Mbiti, p. 197.

¹² Ibid., p. 202.

¹³E. Bolaji Idowu, African Traditional Religion: A Definition (London: S.C.M. Press, 1973) p. 175.

¹⁴J.B. Webster, "Independent Christians in Africa," Tarikh 3:1 (1969) 56-81.

¹⁵Geoffrey Parrinder, Witchcraft (London: Penguin, 1958) passim.

¹⁶Raymond Prince, "The Yoruba Image of the Witch," Journal of Mental Science 107 (1961) 795.

¹⁷Geoffrey Parrinder, African Traditional Religion (London: S.P.C.K., 1968) p. 131.

¹⁸P.A. Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria (London: Frank Cass, 1969) II, 206.

¹⁹Mbiti, pp. 204ff.

²⁰Ibid., p. 166ff.

²¹Gotom, p. 90.

²²Ibid., pp. 90-1.

²³Mbiti, p. 169.

²⁴Ibid., p. 171.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Gotom, p. 92.

²⁷Idowu, Olodumare, pp. 75-6.

²⁸Ibid., p. 75.

²⁹Raymond Prince, "Some Notes on Yoruba Native Doctors and Their Management of Mental Illness" in T.A. Lambo (ed.), First Pan-African Psychiatric Conference Report (Abeokuta, Nigeria: 1961) p. 180.

³⁰Mbiti, p. 177.

³¹Idowu, Olodumare, p. 77.

³²Victor C. Uchendu, The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965) p. 100.

- ³³Mbiti, p. 177.
- ³⁴Idowu, Olodumare, pp. 77-8.
- ³⁵Ibid., p. 137.
- ³⁶Geoffrey Parrinder, Religion in Africa (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969) p. 75.
- ³⁷Idowu, Olodumare, p. 137.
- ³⁸Ibid.
- ³⁹Gotom, pp. 93-4.
- ⁴⁰Mbiti, p. 172.
- ⁴¹M.J. Field, "Spirit Possession in Ghana"; and Robin Horton, "Types of Spirit Possession in Kalabari Religion," in John Beattie and John Middleton (eds.) Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa (New York: Africana, 1969), pp. 12-3, also pp. 14-49.
- ⁴²Mbiti, p. 169.
- ⁴³Idowu, Olodumare, p. 139. See also page of this chapter.
- ⁴⁴Edmond Ilogu, Christianity and Igbo Culture (New York: Nok, 1974) p. 53.
- ⁴⁵Ibid.
- ⁴⁶Ibid.
- ⁴⁷Ibid.
- ⁴⁸Geoffrey Parrinder, West African Religion (London: Epworth Press, 1969) p. 75.
- ⁴⁹E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare, pp. 138-9.
- ⁵⁰Mbiti, p. 58.
- ⁵¹Idowu, Olodumare, p. 118.
- ⁵²Francis A. Arinze, Sacrifice in Ibo Religion (Ibadan: University Press, 1970) p. 32.
- ⁵³Ibid., p. 33.

⁵⁴Prince, "Some Notes," p. 258.

⁵⁵Gotom, p. 106.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 57.

⁵⁸Mbiti, p. 59. See also pp. 53-54 of this work.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 58; also, Arinze, p. 33.

⁶⁰Arinze, p. 33.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., p. 112.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴See page 65 of this work.

⁶⁵Idowu, Olodumare, p. 121.

⁶⁶Arinze, p. 42.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 43.

⁶⁸Cp. 1 Sam. 1:10ff.

⁶⁹Arinze, p. 24.

⁷⁰Idowu, Olodumare, p. 123; see also page 64 above of this work.

⁷¹Mbiti, p. 60.

⁷²Idowu, Olodumare, pp. 123-4.

⁷³Ibid., p. 124.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 125.

⁷⁵Mbiti, p. 61.

⁷⁶Idowu, p. 117.

⁷⁷Gotom, p. 100.

⁷⁸Mbiti, p. 65.

⁷⁹See pages 66-67 of this work.

⁸⁰Mbiti, The Prayers of African Religion (New York: Orbis Books, 1975) p. 4; also Idowu, Olodumare, p. 116.

⁸¹Mbiti, African Religions, p. 43.

⁸²Ibid., p. 78.

⁸³Ibid., p. 79.

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 80-1.

⁸⁵Mbiti, The Prayers, p. 8.

⁸⁶Mbiti, African Religions, p. 86.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 81.

⁸⁸Idowu, Olodumare, pp. 61-2.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 62.

⁹⁰Mbiti, African Religions, p. 110.

⁹¹See relevant sections in some of the literature cited in this project, such as, Idowu, Olodumare, Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy, Parrinder, African Traditional Religion, and West African Religion; see also Benjamin O. Omoṣebi, "Case Study: The Birth of Comfort: (A Case Typical of International and Home Students Relationships) and the Rite of Birth in Some African Traditional Societies Including the Yoruba of South Western Nigeria." (A paper submitted to Dr. Paul G. Schurman for Course AM352, 'Pastoral Counseling Through the Life Cycle: A System's Approach to Crisis Intervention', Summer 1984)

⁹²Mbiti, African Religions, p. 91.

⁹³Gotom, pp. 133-4. cp. Eve P. Welts, "Greek Families" in M. McGoldrick, J.K. Pearce, and J. Giordano (eds.) Ethnicity and Family Therapy (New York and London: Guildford Press, 1982) p. 279.

⁹⁴Mbiti, Prayers, p. 37.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 42.

- ⁹⁶Gotom, p. 101.
- ⁹⁷Mbiti, Prayers, p. 46.
- ⁹⁸Ibid., p. 53.
- ⁹⁹Ibid., p. 62.
- ¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 68.
- ¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 76.
- ¹⁰²Ibid., p. 80.
- ¹⁰³See pages 73-74 above of this work.
- ¹⁰⁴Mbiti, Prayers, p. 88.
- ¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 90.
- ¹⁰⁶See pages 69-72 above of this work.
- ¹⁰⁷Mbiti, Prayers, pp. 101-8.
- ¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 109.
- ¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 111.
- ¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 129.
- ¹¹¹See pages 67-68 above, of this work.
- ¹¹²Mbiti, Prayers, p. 148.
- ¹¹³Ibid., p. 153.
- ¹¹⁴Ibid.
- ¹¹⁵Parrinder, West African Religion, pp. 135-6.
- ¹¹⁶Mbiti, Prayers, p. 156.
- ¹¹⁷Mbiti, African Religions, p. 103.
- ¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 100ff.
- ¹¹⁹Ibid., pp. 149ff.

¹²⁰Parrinder, West African Religion, pp. 110-4.

¹²¹Cp. Jn. 11:35-36.

¹²²E. Fuller Torrey, The Mind Game (New York: Emerson Hall, 1972)

¹²³Parrinder, Religion in Africa, pp. 64-5.

¹²⁴Parrinder, African Traditional Religion, pp. 105-6.

¹²⁵Idowu, African Traditional Religion, p. 188.

¹²⁶Ilogu, p. 53.

¹²⁷Mbiti, African Religions, pp. 167-8.

¹²⁸Ibid., pp. 169-70.

CHAPTER IV

THE AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

WHAT ARE THESE CHURCHES?

Definition.

There are as many definitions and descriptions of the African Independent Churches as there are observers, scholars, and writers on what one can rightly determine as the latest major Christian religious phenomenon in the African Continent.

Geoffrey Parrinder in his book, Religion in an African City, based his definition of these Churches on the studies done by Dr. Sundkler. After dismissing some terms such as "sects"; "African"; "mission"; "international"; and "local," as inadequate and inaccurate in describing or defining the churches, the scholar, decided that: "separatist" seems correct to use in these local sects, and it is that used by Dr. Sundkler.¹

The definition provided by the writer in Chapter One is also considered by other scholars to be appropriate. The African Independent Churches therefore are:

Churches though emerging out of the parent body which in most instances are the Traditional (or the Western oriented) Churches and were founded, organized and administered by indigenous persons.²

H.W. Turner similarly

Choose independent, despite its imprecision, as the best term available to describe those Christian churches which have been founded in Africa, by Africans, and primarily for Africans, and

which lack the substantial association with Western Christianity found in almost all the older churches.³

General Description.

From whichever way, angle or side (whether from the peripheries or closely from within) in which an observer studies churches, he or she would find it very easy to realize why the African Independent Churches are different in practice and (in some areas) in doctrine from the other churches.

In Nigeria, these Churches are popularly referred to and called Aladura Churches, since they are characterised by their emphasis on prayers. Adura is the Yoruba word for prayer. Aladura is therefore the person (or group of persons) who (frequently or more than often) prays.⁴ J.D.Y. Peel says: "Aladura Churches are well-named; àdùrà, prayer is the focal point of all their doctrines and practices."⁵ And writing on the church of the Lord (Aladura), one of the largest African Independent Churches in Nigeria, H.W. Turner says:

It is not without good reason that the Church takes the name 'aladura' or "prayer church." This accords with the extensive practice of prayer in Yoruba religion, and it has been claimed that prayer to the high God is more common among West Africans than among the Bantu, who turn to him only as a last resort when the ancestors and hero-gods have failed.⁶

Turner notes that the origins of the aladura movement is being traced to a prayer society in one of the 'older' (Traditional) Churches who, "are constantly criticized for failing to pray sufficiently."⁷

The simple claim of the Aladura Churches is that "God answers all prayers" and that their doctrines, services, preaching and revelations help the individual to pray effectively. Moreover these groups of churches strongly denounce the common practice of Christians

in using herbs, and medicines (traditional or Western). Their teachings also abhor the practice of Christians consulting diviners, for whatever purpose. In place of these, they teach and encourage their members to "embrace Jesus as all-sufficient Lord and God, who is able to provide all needs and to heal all afflictions."⁸

Dr. Akin Omojajowo, describes the Aladura Churches as:

those indigenous churches which began to emerge in Nigeria from the Second decade of this century . . . They are churches which began as indigenous churches, founded by indigenous persons and run under indigenous leadership. They have always regarded themselves as independent especially of Europeans or foreign domination and, therefore, had no manifest cause to look forward to the political independence of this country to foster their growth, expansion and influence. Their development since the attainment of independence has however been highly significant: in growth, their ecumenical position, their sociological outlook and their attitude to both society and state.⁹

The above also explains, why these churches are referred to as Independent Churches.

Underlying Beliefs.

African Independent Churches were founded to encourage Christians in the deeper practice of their religion through the efficacy of prayer, in contrast to idols and charms. Mbiti echoing a similar notion says:

independent Church movements in Africa, . . . are in their own ways, attempts by African peoples to 'indigenize' Christianity and to interpret and apply it in ways that perhaps spontaneously, render Christianity both practical and meaningful to them.¹⁰

As it has earlier been indicated in Chapter II, Yoruba traditional religion covers a very much wider area of activity than twentieth-century European Christianity does, and naturally Yoruba

Christians are influenced by this. The cardinal religious beliefs for example of the Christ Apostolic Church, ìgbàgbó (Yoruba for faith) and ìgbékèlé (Yoruba for trust), mean much more than faith in Christ having saved Christians' from sin, but also faith that God can fulfil now His promises to answer man's prayers. Restraining from the use of medicines for prayers may not only be physically painful; it provides opportunity for the test of the believers deepest convictions and a demonstration of his faith.

Revelation and healing by prayer and faith therefore play important roles in the African Independent Churches. Revelation comes through dreams and visions, and through meditation when leaders withdraw to solitary places for varying lengths of time. Emphasis is laid on the place and function of the Holy Spirit, and during worship services people often seek to be possessed by Him. When they become so possessed, they speak in other tongues.

There is a fundamental belief in the Bible and literal interpretation of the Scriptures among the Churches. Some have a tendency to stick almost exclusively to the Old Testament and its precepts. In some of the Churches, the leaders are women, and they are fully accepted and respected by their followers.

While some churches tend to follow the pattern of the Traditional Churches in their Services, others conduct their Services, informally claiming to avoid the rigidity and strict formalism of the Traditional Churches. By conducting their Services informally some of these churches claim that they allow for the guidance and total control of the Holy Spirit. African Independent Churches take more seriously activities like singing and preaching, praying for the sick, exorcisms

and the giving of money or other materials to support God's work (ise Oluawa=Yoruba). The Independent Churches observe the Sacraments of Baptism, usually by immersion--following Jesus' example, and the early Church precedent. (Mk 1:5; 9-10 Acts 8:36-9) The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is done, though with less frequency in comparison to the Traditional Churches.

Types.

"Aladura". Majority of the African Independent Churches fall within this category. The churches I have earlier been describing in this chapter also have identical traits with these type of churches. In some areas of South Africa these type of churches are known as "Zionist." They are popular in Western Nigeria, from where they originated and spread to other parts of the country. In some West African communities they are often referred to as the "Spiritual Churches" (ìjọ ẹlẹ̀mì=Yoruba) owing to their emphasis and reliance on the Holy Spirit as the source and life-wire of their churches. A broader term for this group will be "prophet-healing church" or better, "revelatory prophet-healing independent Church."

Messianic. This group of African Independent Churches stresses revelation and salvation; and exalts the founding prophet or leader into the position of a messiah. Roughly this group attaches some importance to the Bible, and wishes to be known as Christian, "in some of them Christ has been displaced from the center" by another personality of African origin thereby making their characterization as Christian very doubtful. In contemporary ecclesiastical studies they may, because of

their nature, be referred to as cults or sects. This group, however, is seldom found in East and West Africa and only a handful of them remain in South Africa among the Bantu independents.¹²

Others.

These are groups of churches which for the purposes of convenience could be sociologically classified as "independent prophet-healing" churches owing to the corporate existence that they exhibit. They usually begin as loose, unorganized cluster of gatherings, with the charismatic leaders providing the much needed inspiration. The several groups soon find themselves becoming more organized; working out their principles, philosophies and systems, and like most other societies and groups, having their government. The clientele type described by Turner, is applicable to any of the three types of Churches described, since this mode applies to the patron rather than to the already established group or church itself. The clientele, as Turner rightly observes, is the form by which a person visits some of these churches in pursuit of 'salvation' deliverance or help for his or her immediate problems and who leaves the church or group after his needs must have been satisfied.¹³

ORIGINS

Some of the repulsive traits revealed in the character and nature of the Traditional Churches described in Chapter II are adduced as factors, responsible for the break away of some group of dissenters from the Traditional Churches who came together to form their own authentic Spiritual Christian communities.¹⁴ For example, like Mbiti,

Peel, Oosthuizen and others claim that:

Independentism in Nigeria could not be ascribed to colour, as Parrinder indicates, but rather to a desire for independence and revival, and, it may be added, for building up a new community in the city. There has nevertheless been a reaction against white missionary paternalism.¹⁵

Other reasons responsible for their emergence, proliferation and continuation will be mentioned in the succeeding paragraphs.

The First Independent Churches.

These churches seceded mainly from the Anglican and Methodist Churches, for reasons purely of politics and Socio-cultural practices such as polygamy rather than for Spiritual discontent. From what Parrinder, and Peel say, regarding the nature of their birth, it seems most unlikely that "the dominant motive in all these secessions was the desire for spiritual independence, rather than any quarrel with orthodox practices or opinions of the older churches" as Turner claims.¹⁶ The resolution of a meeting held in Lagos in 1891 by some Anglican Church members who were to be the founding fathers of the United African Church, reads:

that this meeting in humble dependence upon Almighty God is of the opinion that Africa is to be evangelized and that the foreign agencies at work at the present moment, taking into consideration climatic and other influences, cannot grasp the situation. Resolved that a purely Native African Church be founded for the evangelization and amelioration of our race, to be governed by Africans.¹⁷

The birth of this first type of African Independent Churches in Nigeria took place about the same time as the emergence of the Athiopian types in South Africa according to the studies done by Dr. Sundkler. The Nigerian Churches retained some of the orthodoxy akin to the

Traditional Churches, for example those which seceded from the Anglican Church retained the use of the Churches' Book of Common Prayer; maintained the hierarchical form of ministerial grading; deacons-priests-bishops; use of cassocks and surplices; and Traditional Church architecture, including church supplies. Some of these Churches practice baptism by immersion only while other practice both adult (immersion) and infant baptism. Their services are held in the vernacular, (Yoruba), have theology which is orthodox and Christocentric; they use more of traditional drums; and some of them also have schools, like the Traditional Churches.

Some of these churches have combinations of Methodist polity and Anglican hierarchy or other Traditional forms of administrative procedures. Peel observes that "they did not innovate in doctrine at all, and did not attempt to synthesize any indigenous religious beliefs with Christianity; . . . But they did innovate in . . . organization."¹⁸

The largest and most influential of this first type of Independent Churches was the African Church (incorporated) which was finally founded in 1901 from the United Native African Church earlier established in 1891, in Lagos from the Anglican Church. The origin of its members is traced from the St. Paul's Breadfruit (CMS) Church in Lagos, Nigeria. In 1888, the Native Baptist Church was formed out of a desire of some of the American Baptist Church members in Lagos to be independent. In 1917, the United Native Methodist Church (Eḷéja-Yoruba for Fishmonger) was formed from the Methodist mission in Lagos. The basis for the birth was the desire to be socially, culturally and identically independent. By 1921, six of these churches in Lagos and its suburbs had formed an association known as "the African communion"

with a membership of about 34,000.¹⁹

The Braid Movement.

The earliest of the religious movements started by a prophet and characterised by an emphasis on prayer and healing seems to have been that begun by Garrick Sokari Braide, a charismatic figure known for his strenuous religious exercises. Professor Godwin Tasie describes him as Nigeria's first outstanding indigenous Christian prophet, evangelist and thinker . . .

the Delta native whose influence in Christianity--was later to startle contemporaries with his ruthless attack on shrines, images of worship, charms, pagan priest-hood and medicine men as a key factor in his missionary endeavour--[and] destroying thorns which had been choking the seeds of Christianity.²⁰

Born about 1882 in Obonoma, Braid discovered his gift while a member of the Niger Delta Pastorate (Anglican) Church, from where his ministry took off spreading over a large area of the Niger Delta, reaching as far as Bakana, Bonny, Opobo and other, areas by 1915. He enjoyed support for his tremendous spiritual revival from both the Anglican clergy including Bishop James Johnson, the African Assistant Bishop supervising the Niger Delta area, and other lay members of the community. Hundreds of converts were baptised. Followers demonstrating repentance and faithfulness to the new religion which the prophet expounded destroyed idols, charms, and other magical objects in large quantities; people abstained from the alcoholic liquor that had been "a thorn in the flesh" of the Delta area; observing the Sabbath Day attending church and other religious services regularly; and many wonderful healings through the prayers of Braid and his assistants were being reported. He, unlike the missionaries, avoided the intellectual

approach of evangelism. His attitude was radical and practical. He did not bother himself teaching and expounding creeds. He might have regarded such methods alien and unpractical. His main method therefore was a jihad against charms, fetishes and idols.²¹

The prophet soon became the object of a superstitious reverence and he was called Elijah II. The water in which he washed became a potent for healing; the ordinary use of medicines was condemned as unchristian, while the words of the prophet became sacrosanct and was accepted as the very word of God, so superseding the scriptures and the very word of the church. There came out charlatans, who practised irregular baptism, and who exploited the phenomenon to satisfy their selfish motives. The unbecoming behaviour of the "false prophets" combined with the politics and leadership disputes subjected the movement into constant surveillance and censorship by the Bishop and the entire administration. Braid as a "son of the soil" enjoyed a greater support despite the threat from 'above', and in a meeting of the Niger Delta Board in 1916, presided by the Bishop himself various church agents were recommended from various disciplinary forms. The prophet Braid organized his followers and the movement into the Christ Army Church, which itself had a turbulent experience until the leaders death in November 1918. By 1921, the Church had three main sections, with about 43,000 members. Today, the Braid movement still exists and functions in many different forms.²²

The Aladura Movement.

Beginnings. In 1918, there occurred a terrible influenza epidemic during which about 250,000 died in Southern Nigeria.²³ At St. Saviour's (Anglican) Church, Ìjẹ́bú Òde, the people's warden Joseph B.

Sadare, organized a praying band, "the Precious Stone Society," whose members renounced all medicine and relied solely on God for succour, in the time of trouble. The principles and methods of Sadare's Society spread to young Ijebus in Lagos, among whom a clerk, David Odubanjo organized a religious society. Odubanjo was an earnest reader of religious tracts from Europe and America, and through him the Precious Stone Society became linked to an American Church, Faith Tabernacle, whose doctrine of total reliance on God for all human needs easily corresponded with what had earlier been revealed in visions to Sadare and the others at Ijebu Ode.²⁴

During the 1920's there were other outbreaks of sickness--bubonic plague and smallpox--and there emerged other groups such as the Cherubim and Seraphim, and the Church of the Lord, Aladura, all which preached the power of prayers. The Cherubim and Seraphim was one of the major groups which was to grow into one of the enviable Aladura Churches in Nigeria, later (like others) spreading to Britain and other parts of the Western world, was established in 1925. The principal founders were a sixteen year old girl, Abiodun Akinsowon, the daughter of a clergyman in Dahomey of Sierra Leone descent, and Moses Orínládé Tunlase, an uneducated Christian convert from Àkókó who for over ten years had travelled all over Nigeria preaching and praying. The Spiritual Society--Cherubim and Seraphim--which they founded was intended to supplement the Churches, and attracted a wide membership in Lagos, while its grand processions, and miracles of healing were similarly reported in the Lagos press. Its main activities included Bible classes and prayer meetings.²⁵ According to Peel, the year 1927, marks the beginning of a wider diffusion of Aladura practices, for in

that year the Seraphim sent evangelistic parties to Abeokuta, Ijebu, Ibadan, Ife, Ilesa, and Ondo, where they attracted great attention. At Abeokuta they were summoned to preach before the Alake and at Ondo they were hosted by a church committee. Thereafter they collected a great number of charms, and magical objects which were burnt in St. Stephen's church yard. This pattern of revival attended by repentance and conversion similar to that of the prophet Braid in the Niger Delta characterised the nature of the spread of these churches across the country. At different places and occasions, the newly converted were organized into groups, and provided an appointed leader from the existing church and soon, a branch of that church is formed and firmly established.

Calibre of Membership. It may be appropriate at this juncture to ask, consider and discuss the question (as Dr. Omojajowo and other scholars did), what type, class or category of people participate or do get involved in the Aladura or African Independent Churches?²⁶

A good knowledge of a movement and a religion could be learned by studying those whom it attracts and the nature of how it spreads. Many people to think that Aladuras are very different from Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, or Presbyterians, and so are illiterates or less educated and socially not as privileged. In areas of doctrine and practices, Aladura members are different, but in other areas of life, especially in present times, they rank equally well with their peers and contemporaries of other churches.

A closer look at the founders of the Aladura Churches in the early years, 1918-1930, reveals that these people were predominantly clerks, literate traders, or teachers--both in the Cherubim and

Seraphim, Faith Tabernacle, and such people formed a small minority of the population in those days. These founders were also young men, many of whom lived away from home, as we do have some Ijebu people in the city of Lagos or Egbas (Abeokuta indigenes) in Ibadan. A typical illustration of this trend could be found in the example of the Faith Tabernacle, which soon found a following among the young Ijebus at St. Andrew's College, ^{Ọyọ}, where one of the tutors was a member. At this stage of the movement, Faith Tabernacle members had already been expelled from the Anglican Church because of their opposition to infant baptism and curative medicine.²⁷ Other dissenters who would have become Anglican school teachers went into trade or the civil service. They remained until their death, founding father and pillars of the new church.

It is because of these early members that all Aladura Churches have strongly insisted on the importance of the Bible. At their Churches an observer will always see many people following the sermon with their Bibles open on their laps. Illiterate members have been taught to read, and such difficult practices as abstention from medicine are justified as being biblical. It is on record that the first educated man to be Olubadan (King) of Ibadan, Oba I.B. Akinyele, joined Faith Tabernacle in 1924, and later became head of the Christ Apostolic Church. He had hitherto been a member of both the synod delegate and Diocesan Board of the Anglican Diocese of Ibadan since 1915 and 1917, respectively. His brother was later to become the Anglican Bishop of Ibadan.²⁸ Joseph B. Sadare, a prominent member of St. Saviour Anglican Church, Ijebu-Ode, who later became one of the founding fathers of the Christ of Apostolic Church, was a founder of the Ijebu Ode Grammar

School, itself an Anglican institution. Several of these early members were known to have eventually occupied high secular positions in their respective communities, or were closely connected with the Anglican clergy. To mention a few, W.F. Sosan of the Cherubim and Seraphim movement in Abeokuta was Clerk of the Egba Council, I.B. Akinyele was brother to Bishop Akinyele of Ibadan and prophetess Olatunrinle of the Cherubim and Seraphim movement was the sister of Bishop Awosika of Ondo (both Anglican).²⁹

Writing on the same subject, C.G. Baeta says:

--people do not join the "spiritual churches" unless they find themselves wanting something or other that the churches are believed to enable them to obtain. Many stay on if their wishes have been realized, or if they are able to continue to hope; many leave again whatever the result of their joining has been. Usually people go for healing after having unsuccessfully tried scientific medicine or African herbal treatment or the fetish priest or all three.---A few said, that they went or would go to them because it was a cheap way of getting healed: "All you need to pay is the collection, and you can make that what you like."³⁰

Finally, F.W. Welbourn in East African Rebels, says:

It is proper to ask, what sort of people join Independent Churches? It might be equally proper to ask, What sort of people do not? The forces in West African Society, centrifugal from the norm of Western government and mission, are immensely strong; and, in many ways, it is surprising to find that any but the most highly acculturated still cling to the norm. But to either question there is no answer in terms of individual psychology---, a personal significance which is not available to them in the mission churches. Some clearly seek a legitimization of moral behaviour which is disallowed by the missions. Some are deeply sincere and practice an enthusiasm and evangelical commitment which might put both missionaries and African Christians alike to shame. Few can be regarded as psychologically abnormal or in personality, significantly different from the norm of Christian society. The fact is that men of all types are to be found--within the [African] Independent Churches.³¹

The Great Revival of 1930. In spite of all the foregoing expansion of the 1920's, however, the Aladura movement would have remained of minor importance if it had not been for the great revival of 1930. This event unleashed itself in late July of the same year at Ilesa, in a meeting of the leaders of the Faith Tabernacle.³² The main agent of this phenomenon was the young Joseph Ayo Babalola, born at Ilofa in 1904, he was soon to become one of the most central and most famous figures in the whole Aladura movement.³³ This young man gave up his mechanic trade with the Public Works Department where he was working as a foreman to take up the work of the Lord; a direction which he sternly received in a vision.³⁴ With Bible and hand bell the young prophet prophesied that those who renounced the devil and all its works, in the forms of charms, amulets and the like, and relying on God in its place and "the water of life"--omi iyè = Yoruba--(from a stream which he sanctified by prayer), would be cured of all their ills.

Within a week large crowds had collected from as far as Ijebu, Ilorin and across the Niger from Lokoja. Other prophets soon appeared on the scene, notably Daniel Òrèkòyà and Josiah Òsítèlú at Ibadan. Within the next few years the whole of Yoruba land beyond into the hinterland of Nigeria was visited, but Ekiti and Akoko both in Western Nigeria were the most affected, for on leaving Ilésà, Babalolá went to Èfòn Alàyè, whose Òba, Aládéjàrè, welcomed him and where he made his base.

Factors Favouring the Spread of the Churches. This particular factor is strongly related to the reasons suggested for their birth (Origin) as previously discussed under the heading ORIGIN a point which is also traceable to some of the undesirable manifestations in the

Traditional Churches, which I earlier mentioned in Chapter II.³⁵

Historical. The most prominent factor favourable to the revival movement in its early years of upsurge and popularity was the historical.

There had been a rising tide of religious conversion and social change. At Efon Alaye, the Oba was known as a supporter of the new awakening. In 1923, the QMS reported "a huge surge" in their membership there, and in 1926, the new road from Ilesa to Ado reached Efon. Bicycles and tinroofs were introduced in the 1920's and in many places saw a rise in prosperity from the sale of cocoa. But this meant that the authority of old traditions was weakened; and added to this were the epidemics and after 1930, a dramatic drop in the cocoa price. 1932 saw a severe famine in Egbaland.

Many are the hardships which Satan has sent us now, mighty dangers hang over the world . . . all the people of the world suffer from lack of trade, shortage of money and unemployment . . . The times are changing . . . famine, epidemic and death are abundant. In a phrase, the whole world is upside down,

says a member of the Aladura Church in describing the current events during a prayer meeting.³⁶

According to the Aladura religious leaders, one of the reasons for the unpleasant situation was that God was angry with mankind for their sins and had therefore decided to punish them. God according to a Cherubim and Seraphim prophet, sent angels "to withhold the efficacy of leaves, barks and roots (to make medicine) and to wave fiery swords which cause sudden death." Babalola agreed with this: "God was going to render (medicines) useless and powerless," he had been told in 1928; to use medicine therefore was not only apostate but also useless. Only

repentance and prayer would do. The Cherubim and Seraphim movement for example in 1931-2 held grand processions of penitence through the streets of Lagos to publicize this interpretation of events.³⁷

Religious. One other explanation for the phenomenological expansion was that many believed that evil spirits and witches were especially active and in fact many people rushed to drink "the water of life," to show that they were not witches. At that time and in many prayer meetings that were held, some people were reported to have confessed to being witches.³⁸ In some instances, Obas and Chiefs invited prophets to check and identify witches for possible disciplinary measures. Moses Orimolade, the Bábá (Father) Aladura wrote to a chief in Ijebu Waterside, "God will send you his blessings abundantly, wizards, witches and Juju men will have no power over you" Both Babalola and Ositelu were eventually arrested on a charge of witchcraft-hunting and kept in prison for some months.

Inherent in the belief of the Aladura Churches is that the enemy (the devil) manifesting itself in several forms, and lodged in the numerous maladies that afflicted the flesh, must be driven out and muzzled, correlating this to the purge exercise made by Jesus during his visit to the temple in Jerusalem (Mk 11:15-17). Spiritual healing therefore came to acquire an important position in the life of these Churches, especially the Christ Apostolic Church. It was to them, the indisputable sign of the victory of faith, the proof that the spiritual warfare was a genuine contest. In the Aladura Church, the prophet's role is very important. He, for example, channels the forces of healing into the community, presides over the awakening when it arrives, and sustains prayer as the essential supply-line of the struggle.

The Christ Apostolic Church, like all other Aladura Churches, stresses the importance of the Holy Spirit, who is regarded as the source of transforming power in the life of the church. Many of the early church members testified to being filled with the Holy Spirit, and as a consequence, received Spiritual gifts. These Spiritual gifts to them were only additional blessings to the Christian life and not a prerequisite for salvation. The specific gifts of healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, wisdom and interpretation, were the concentrated signs of the Holy Spirit, who was nevertheless still active in keeping alive an awareness of moral qualities through a more diffuse indwelling of his presence. Peel's interesting observation needs mentioning here:

Christianity [he contends] was widely conceived of instrumentally, that is, was believed to be efficacious in attaining this-worldly goals, though Christians were in the habit of taking every other possible insurance and protection that they considered effective. When therefore at a time of heavy religious change, the Yoruba were inflicted with a series of natural disasters--influences, plagues, famines, and depression following the rapid growth of a monetary economy--these demanded a religious interpretation. Their unusually severe nature meant that the traditional religion, already fast declining, was inadequate to explain or relieve them, and Christianity (which had every sign of permanence and was generally associated with what the young and ambitious felt desirable) was so used. The God whom the Christians preached had sent the disasters as a punishment, but the Christian religion provided the way out.³⁹

Professor Ilogu likewise attributed the impressive growth of the Churches among the Ibo to Orthodox "pentecostalism and Ibo [African] traditional experience." He states that:

The genius for prophetism in the form of vision seeing and vision interpretation is like traditional divination. The combination of healing through herbs and oils with religious practices, and the desire for visible symbols of religious vitality in the form of spirit possession, ecstasy and the feeling of abandon and "carefree"--worship have their counter part in traditional religion 40

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES (CHARACTERISTICS)

The Bible: The Inspired Word of God.

Like orthodox pentecostals, the African Independent Churches declare that the Scriptures are the official basis of the Church. For them the Bible was inspired and therefore infallible.⁴¹ The Bible is important to them as the Holy Spirit, prayers of visions. Indeed it provides both the intellectual and religious justification for their belief and practices. To them any teaching or practice that could not be corroborated by biblical references was dubious, false and therefore must be from the devil. This attitude Turner suggests, is partly a cultural reaction on the part of a people whose [traditional] background is devoid of literature, and who desire to assure themselves and the world that they have passed fully into the new way of life based on writing of the book.⁴² Indeed they often refer to the Bible as "the book of life" (Ìwé-ìyè=Yoruba). The Bible has come to be a distinguishing and visible mark of a genuine African Independent Church. Members are often urged to bring their Bibles with them to all their meetings and services and to attend their scheduled Bible classes. Like the Pentecostals these Christians live with the Bible.

"Rolled Away": The Doctrine of Justification (Ìdáláre=Yoruba)

For most members of the African Independent Churches, the fundamental experience necessary to salvation is conversion or regeneration. This belief is often expressed in their very passionate and emotional hymns, songs, and choruses which talk of:

The miraculous transformation which takes place in soul and life of the sinner in the moment in which he repents and declares his sincere faith in Christ Jesus as his Saviour.⁴³

Popular hymns underlying this doctrine include

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
Oh precious is the flow, that makes me white as snow;
No other form I know; Nothing but the blood of Jesus.⁴⁴

Also:

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.⁴⁵

On most occasions, the appellation of the scriptural verses upon which the hymns are based are read as the hymns are announced. This is also to confirm the Churches reliance on the Bible as its source of inspiration and the basis of its teaching, belief, and practice. The inscription on the previously quoted hymn reads: "On that day there shall be a fountain opened--to cleanse--from sin and uncleanness," from Zechariah 13:1.

The theme or basis for the call to conversion by the preacher is either material (mundane) or religious urgency or both. Materially the preacher attempts to convince his members of their sufferings, their loneliness, sickness, and all other forms of inadequacy. He then assures any of the victims that the desperate situation can be overcome by coming to Jesus Christ. A similar method is applied for a religious approach. Here the preacher similarly attempts to convince the congregation of the "utter depravity of human nature," hence the necessity for repentance and regeneration.

However great a sin may be committed by a person before he receives the Lord Christ, if he believes in him and accepts him, the sin is forgiven.

Salvation is not only reforming ourselves and turning over a new leaf, nor is it becoming a church member--although all saved should do so--but salvation is being washed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ and becoming a new creature in Christ.⁴⁶

Showers of Blessing: The Doctrine of the Spirit.

African Independent Churches are popularly referred to as Ijo elemi, that is, Churches of the Spirit, because of their regularity and emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the source and life-wire (sustainer) of their various bodies.

They therefore take pride in being "Spiritual" in comparison to the Traditional Churches which they describe as "unspiritual" "bureaucratic" "hypocritical" and "syncretistic." Like most Pentecostals, the African Independent Churches opine that the Traditional Churches have departed from the Commandments of God, so that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the healing of the sick, prophecy, and speaking in tongues have disappeared and the Church had therefore become lifeless and powerless; because God's promises and blessings never fail. To be "spiritual" they believe, is a mark of the true church.⁴⁷

The main work of the Holy Spirit is to guide and empower, and so to deliver individuals from all evils. "The Holy Spirit is actively present in our organization," claims one of the churches. "It is by the Spirit that our ministers and members are guided in fulfillment of God's promises."⁴⁸ Some churches are greatly inclined to consider themselves to be the especial recipients of Divine Grace, or, in the language most often used, of Spiritual power (agbára^{emí}=Yoruba). Alágbára (=Yoruba)

Dispenser of Power, is a frequent epithet for God in hymns and prayers; people believe they can do some things L'agbara Ọlọrun (=Yoruba) in the Power of God. Moreover all the great prophets were alágbára ẹmí. (=Yoruba) men of spiritual power. During its early years, people were reported to have joined the Christ Apostolic Church for a variety of reasons, but generally for its manifestation of spiritual power. Once members, they were instructed in the causes of this power, which is related to the Church's distinctive doctrines. Converts were often made to believe that their membership in the church is membership in a church with genuine doctrines, validated by the effects of spiritual power.

Prophecy. W.J. Hollenweger quotes a foreign source which defines prophecy as:

the ability to reveal future events, and can be recognized by the following signs: First, that it is fulfilled in due time. Secondly, that it is fulfilled without doubt in exact accordance with the prophecy. And it must be such that could not have been spoken on the basis of human foresight, the prophet being solely dependent on the inspiration of the Spirit.⁴⁹

African Independent Churches think of prophecy as foretelling of the future as well as edification. Of significant importance is this phenomenon where conditions of life are difficult and desperate, and where the situation necessitated a concrete prediction of the future. The enquiry is done through dreams, visions and prophesying. The basis of revelation through the above media, is Joel 2:28-38:

---I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Turner quotes the Church of the Lord (Aladura) which he studied

as stating that:

We believe in dreams and visions because those of ancient days used to speak to God through visions and dreams. People like Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Jacob, Joseph, Solomon, etc . . . And we are directed by the Holy Spirit.'⁵⁰

All the Churches believe that this practice of dreams, vision and prophecy is, as usual, scripturally supported.

Dreams and Visions. Dreaming is the ability of traveling and acting spiritually during sleeping; and it is regarded as the lowest form of revelation, but has its peculiar levels or degrees through which the earnest "spiritualist" must seek to progress, as he "learns to dream truly."⁵¹

Similarly a trance is the pre-eminent vision and what it reveals is bound to happen, thereby corroborating the content of a genuine dream. Visions are said to occur in private meditation or prayer, or during any part of corporate worship, and members may be ready to relate what they saw during the sermon or prayer or hymn provided the vision stopped short of the trance state and some connection with consciousness was retained.

Members of these churches are encouraged to record their dreams in books and to report them for later interpretation usually private but sometimes in services. To generate these elements, prayers, fasting, chastity and the reading of scriptures are particularly suggested; and despite the clarity of the true dream or vision, interpretation is usually necessary since "the word of God always speaks with parables." Where the minister is involved in the interpretation, there is the opportunity for exhortation, pastoral advice, and sometimes mild public discipline.

Prophecy. Those ministers or laymen who possess prophetic gifts are said to prophesy when they pass on to others revelations or "messages" based on what has been seen or heard through the special work of the spirit. Unsolicited prophecies are frequently given to individuals either in private houses or at the appointed time in the church service, when messages may also be given to a certain group in the congregation or to members as a whole. Much of this is indistinguishable from general pastoral advice or spiritual exhortation, cast in a form that gives extra divine sanction and secures closer attention. The subject of such prophecies represent the usual anxieties and problems, especially those of choosing a marriage partner; of the matrimonial life itself; of child bearing for women; employment; business or prosperity for both men and women. These situations differ slightly from the questions brought to the traditional diviner, the babaláwo of Yoruba traditional religion,⁵² or the new shrines in Ghana, described by Field.⁵³ It should be noted as the Churches themselves contend that while the Scriptures condemn all divining that is associated with magic, spells, and laying of curses, yet they exhibit the early Christian community depending on the casting of lots to discover the will of God. (Acts 1:26) The prophet or "spiritualist" is important not only as one who discloses God's will, but also as a man of spiritual power.

Doctrine of the Baptism of the Spirit. According to the African Independent Churches like any other Pentecostal group, the Traditional Churches are still in the marginal stage of Easter and Pentecost. The Independents argue that although the Traditional Churches know that

Jesus died and rose again, they do not own the Pentecostal power which fell on the disciples when they were behind closed doors, drove them out, and turned them to be courageous witnesses to the historical Christ. Like their Pentecostal counterparts,

The Saviour himself did not preach until he had received this baptism, and he did not let his disciples preach without baptism with the Holy Spirit. We see how important this baptism is. The true aim of the Church of Jesus Christ is to restore this ruined inheritance amongst our people.⁵⁴

The African Independent Churches preach and encourage the Holy Spirit most earnestly. Most of their pastors, prophets, leaders and the laity have described it as "the most memorable thing in their lives."⁵⁵ The Holy Spirit and its manifestations, important as it is has not been allowed to generate into idolatry, (a worship of power). To the Independent Churches, the manifestations of the baptism--speaking with tongues, the gift of healing, wisdom, interpretation, prophecy, vision; dreams, and several others are not essential nor necessary to salvation, but only "the nature of free bonuses."⁵⁶ The Churches believe that the Holy Spirit and its attendant gifts and fruits, constitute the equipping of an individual with the necessary power for missionary service. It is specially designed for the church on earth, but it is also of immense value, since without it, as the history of the church itself reveals, the Church cannot be a missionary Church. The Holy Spirit must be understood as a liberating, disinhibiting experience, integrating emotional and sometimes even erotic urges. For the Aladura pastor, the baptism of the Spirit is an indispensable equipment in the dispensation of his ministry. In terms of the phenomenology of religion, a pastor of the African Independent Church could be described as a modern day Shaman (medicine man). Through the baptism of the Spirit he learns to use

levels of his soul and his body hitherto unknown to him, as sense organs with which to apprehend a psychological climate, a group dynamic situation.

Speaking in Tongues (Glossolalia).

Like their Pentecostal brethren, the African Independent Churches teach that . . . "Speaking in tongues . . . is a sign that the recipient is possessed by the Holy Spirit."

[It is] the sign of the baptism of the Spirit . . . All gifts which the Spirit brings and gives had already been given individually before Pentecost, except for speaking in other tongues with interpretation! Thus this was the new sign by which the baptism of the Spirit was known 57

By speaking in tongues the Independent Churches mean speaking in a tongue of men or angels which the speaker has never learned. There is (a) speaking in tongues as the initial sign of the baptism of the Spirit; and (b) speaking in tongues as one of the gifts of the Spirit. In the situation of the latter, a clarification is made between public speaking in tongues in services, which according to Cor. 14:27 must always be interpreted, and personal speaking in tongues, which can be described as a non-intellectual prayer and promise too deep for words (Rom. 8:26). Sometimes

[the worshippers] were caught up in an ecstatic volume of united worship. Speaking in tongues which occurs at such a time is not for the edification of others, but is devoted to the worship of the Most High God. These special movings of the Spirit we always welcome and encourage.⁵⁸

Healing By Prayer and The Doctrine of Miracles.

The Practice. The teaching and practice of healing by prayer occupied a very high position and level of interest among the African Independent Churches. One of these churches, the Christ Apostolic

Church for example say that divine healing is one of the three pillars on which the Church of Christ rests;⁵⁹ while another body, the Church of the Lord considers healing as second only to the interest in revelation.⁶⁰

To the African mind, disease is closely linked with religion. One of the major concerns therefore of the African Traditional Religion and consequently of the African Independent Churches is to cure people of sickness. The arrival of Western missionaries we have earlier observed was followed first by elementary medical treatments and later by the 'mission' hospitals. These provided new help and hope, but the heavy casualty rate among missionaries in West Africa, demonstrated to some extent, the inadequacies of Western medicine, as did the epidemic influenza of 1918. Such situations might have led the African Independent Churches to lay great emphasis on the doctrine in the power of prayers to cure all sickness. The Christ Apostolic Church went further to prohibit all means except omi iyè (=Yoruba = Water of life = water consecrated by prayer). This practice has always been the churches' valued belief.

Alongside the teaching of divine healing by prayer is a belief in salvation from sin and reliance on God for all . . . needs.⁶¹ The Christ Apostolic Church leads most Aladura Churches in this practice. "Sickness has always been recognized as the result of sin or unbelief of some kind."⁶² In a six-point exposition of their doctrine, the Church says that drugs and other human remedies weaken faith in Christ, that faith must not be "assassinated" by the bad example of leaders and that denial of divine protection would send their people back to idolatry, since "it is our common experience that traditional priest, and medicine

men have both good and bad medicines."⁶³ This last remark indicates that it is being thought that medicine did have some efficacy, and that to renounce it would be difficult and requires a tough faith. However, the Christian is urged to rely on God as Creator.

Healing by prayer and the doctrine of miracles is therefore a constant feature of the African Independent Churches. Among the Churches, there is a threefold dimension to the practice. The "pneumatic" element is present in the prayers and invocations to Christ and the Holy Spirit, in the exorcism and in the absolution; the physical is represented by the confession and the whole atmosphere of expectation; visible physical treatment includes the imposition of hands (or in some Churches, the iron rod) and the use of water and oil. Like the orthodox Pentecostals they say "we believe in divine healing according to Holy Scriptures by prayer, by anointing with oil, and by the laying on of the hands."⁶⁴

In their teaching of the doctrine of healing through prayer, the African Independent Churches say:

Whatever your sickness and its cause may be, you know that it is an oppression by Satan, a work of the devil. Put your trust in Jesus Christ, who has come to destroy the works of the devil and to set free the oppressed, and you will be healed.⁶⁵

In their attempt to inculcate the element of faith in their members, some Churches say: "Healing does not fail because of the will of God, but because of the unbelief of his children."⁶⁶ Most of these Churches also accept divine healing, without making it a doctrinal principle, except as a manifestation of the power of God and his love.

The explanation of the expectation of miracles in the African Independent Churches, as in Pentecostalism is based on the

fundamentalist belief that Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8); that those who believe are accompanied by the signs of faith (Mk. 16:17-18); that Jesus Christ has come to preach good news to the poor to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind (Lk. 4:18) and that he has borne men's sicknesses and carried their pains. (Isa. 53:4).

An Appraisal. Healing through prayer has been of immense benefit and rewarding soothing experience to many people. Those who pursue this medium in the treatment of their troubles do so for many reasons. These range from lack of time, money or confidence, cannot or will not be treated medically.⁶⁷ These sufferers are not to be blamed if as the last resort, they turn to God. As a phenomenon, healing through prayer can be seen to be an effective form of support, and some instances, a substitute for healing. The healing powers of group-psychological and sociological factors--to which members of these churches have access in the form of prayer--are more important than people were prepared to concede a few years ago. But precisely because we are dealing with forces which cannot be ignored, their application should not be left solely to the whims and caprices of some possible fame-seeking spiritualists and charlatans.

Apparent healings that had been followed by a relapse may be explained as due to lack of faith. Others who have practically relapsed may continue for fear of societal reaction to assert that they have been healed. There is often a recognition that certain sickness should have been treated by Western medicine, particularly in cases where insistence on some of these Churches have denied some patients the simple operation that might have helped him or her; or the urgently necessary hospital

treatment that could have saved a life. Such incidents though have been reported to have happened are however not common among the churches.

Owing to what someone might consider as fanatical and extremist tendencies of some of the teachings of this practice, divine healing and medicine could be seen to be depicted as rivals, and this should not be so. In advocating divine healing, however, none of these churches have categorically stated that the form is superior to medicine (Traditional or Western). One of the teachings on healing by prayer by the African Independent Churches can itself negate one of the natural principles of religion--supplication: "Thy will be done." It can revert to or be tantamount to magic: "It must be done," or "my will must be done."

African Traditional healing is part of its Traditional religion. When therefore the African Independent Churches reject African Traditional religion, this implies rejecting everything associated with it. This is an issue which cannot be considered in this project, but which the writer feels should be studied and discussed in the very near future.

Also found wanting is the rationale of creation and of its relation to redemption; to deny all human agency, and every created element except water (and perhaps oil) as instruments of deliverance, ignores both the Lordship of Christ and the redemption wrought through his incarnation in the manifold subject of the flesh. This is a failure to interpret healing in Christological fashion, and to strain for some more "spiritual" mode. But the Church has demonstrated that it is not static or rigid in its thinking, and these defects may gradually pass in the course of a fuller understanding of the Scriptures that speak of Christ, together with a more positive attitude to the use of modern

medical services. At the same time as the thesis of this project states, the Church should not lose its grasp of the spiritual dimensions of healing, and indeed of the relationship between pastor and doctor, when its own ministers fail to perform the functions of both.

Ethics.

Tithing. Most if not all African Independent Churches follow their Pentecostal counterparts in the practice of tithing as a biblically sanctioned method of raising revenue in meeting their financial expenses. An offering of ten percent of their members' gross income is normally required; and the practice is seen as the surest way, the "open Sesame" to financial prosperity and achieving wealth. Their popular Scriptural basis for this belief is:

Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. (Malachi 3:10)

"Remember the Sabbath Day . . .": The Observance of Sunday.

Basing the teaching of the hallowing the Lord's day on Scriptural injunctions: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" Ex. 20:8ff; the African Independent Churches state that:

In these days when the Lord's day is being desecrated by so many, we as a church feel it our duty to take a stand against the practice of buying and selling on Sunday, attending meetings for worldly amusement, visiting resorts, promiscuous and questionable joy-riding, etc. on the Lord's day.⁶⁸

Other Characteristics.

The Charismatic Call of a Prophet. The call and the ministries of the founding leaders of the African Independent Churches have been mentioned briefly in the early sections of this Chapter.⁶⁹ These callings follow a pattern which is familiar to the Bible, for example the call of the Old Testament prophets or that of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. Epiphanic experiences in forms of compelling visions, repeated dreams, lead finally to the total and complete surrender of the candidate to God's call and His commissioning to the ministry. With this surrender appear some gifts of the Holy Spirit; power of healing; prophetic insight and revelatory abilities; charisma; charity and love. These according to these Churches are the graces which have always been bestowed on the men and women who have completely surrendered to God's call and claims.

Apostolic Zeal and Missionary Power. African Independent Churches claim to have observed that charismatic prophets do not waste anytime. Their models in teaching this idea, include the Apostle Paul immediately after his calling and Peter immediately after having received the Holy Spirit. They both announced the good news of salvation in Christ Jesus in plain and demonstrable terms. These New Testament Apostles cannot but witness to the newness of life in Christ, which they have just experienced. They cannot but proclaim the victory of Christ over principalities and powers, over Satan, and over death, over sickness including those elements and factors which reduces the vital factors, the forces of life. Such examples, with their own experiences of perseverance in the face of many odds, have given the

African Independent Churches, an overwhelming sense of mission, making them to bring something of the Christian gospel to the deepest needs and yearnings of African life, not only at the level of an individuals conscious problems, but at the basic levels of the collective experience and archetypal ideas and images that shape his life and thought. Whereas some Christian approaches in Africa have been too intellectual and catechetical, independent churches have a measure of success because "they have turned what they were taught into a religion of being and doing, when they found it a religion of mental culture."⁷⁰ It is indeed at this level that someone must understand the African Independent Churches theme of victory over the evil powers, so evident in its hymnal, prayers, and sermons, and the archetypal image of water through which the Spirit acts in so many symbolic ways. By this these Churches are able to communicate the gospel in a way that African people are able to hear.⁷¹

The Sense of Belonging - (A New Community). Just as people observe in the Old Testament, around the prophets, the body of the people of God becomes a living reality. A community was usually created which offered to her people a real sense of belonging, a new home, a new loyalty, which in African traditions replaces the loyalty of the clan. A visit to any of the African Independent Churches will in a short time reveal that the church like any of its kind is a community which lives what it believes, and believes what it lives. It is a community that caters for the whole man, for physical, social and spiritual needs. There is no such dichotomy between soul and body, between a religious sphere and a secular life.

One observes an intensive diaconal activity happening among the members as the womenfolk take care of each other, and other people needing one support or the other; so also are the men. The whole week is full of church engagements; prayer groups; singing groups; and other mutual interaction. In crisis situations, such as bereavement, sickness or any other misfortune; as well as in times of joy, happiness and celebration, there is proper Christian care and fellowship. The characteristic African communal life is at its best during these occasions. The African Independent Churches constantly endeavor to emulate the Koinonia practice recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and which was probably the most effective factor for the spread of the Gospel during the First century. The enormous success of these Churches in the present age both in ministry and in evangelism, have been attributed by many people to the koinonia strategy which consciously or unconsciously they have adopted in their churches. In this regard, the African Independent Churches are reminding as well as posing a challenge to the Traditional Churches. A truly indigenous Church as Reyburn puts it,

is a group of believers who live out their life including their socialised Christian activity, in the patterns of the local society, and for whom any transformation of that society comes out of their felt needs under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures.⁷²

The Universality of the Church. Providing a scriptural basis for their teaching on the "brotherhood of man" communal life and equality in Christ, a leader of one of the African Independent Churches quoted Galatians 3:28:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male or female; for you are one in Christ.

The leader claimed that in their Church, prejudices and mutual judgements animosity, paternalism are never condoned nor are they tolerated because any of them can inhibit the proper working of the Holy Spirit.

Worship. Many of the African Independent Churches often describe their form of Christianity as "this new way of worship," first because of the great departure from the Traditional Churches pattern of worship because the former has introduced much of the simple and practical mode of life into a rich tapestry with its own characteristic features. There is so much of the self-awareness by the members and churches of their devotion to God with prayer and praise spoken not only by the lips but in a great variety of bodily movements and gestures.

Some of the Churches ascribe some attention and significance to Sacred places such as--The Holy City, The Holy Temple and its sanctuary; the mercy ground; Home altars (majority or all the Churches recommend this to their members, as a place where they can personally meet with God); and Hills and the Seashore.⁷³ Sacred objects to which some of the Churches regard as important include staffs of office; the Holy Rosary; Vestments; Crosses; and candles.⁷⁴ Churches which encourage these Sacred places and objects are the Church of the Lord; The Cherubim and Seraphim Movement; and the Celestial Church of Christ.

Water. Owing to their symbolic and sacramental use of water, the African Independent Churches are also often referred to as the "water-people." Outside some of the Churches, earthen pots of water are provided for washing the feet before entering--this is said to be following the Muslim practice of worship. However, inside most of all

the Churches, buckets and bottles of water, are usually found at the front or other designated places. The water becomes "holy" through consecration by a minister or leader. Consecration of water may take place anywhere; and women and men commonly bring bottles to the minister at the faith-home; or ask him to bless some water when he visits them. In the Church of the Lord or the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement for example holy water is sprinkled on people as a visible sign of sanctification as Moses sprinkled the children of Israel with water.⁷⁵ Among the African Independent Churches, water is a regular feature of special services for naming children, enrolling new members, anointing ministers, or receiving the Lord's Supper, and it may be used whenever there is a special Spiritual interest. Very occasionally, the water may be drunk in the course of the ritual. Water is also used in other rituals outside the church, it is poured on charms or medicine to destroy the evil spirits before burning the objects, it is sprinkled round the foundations of a new building to protect it from evil, it is given as a drink in exorcizing; in cleaning and dressing of wounds; to cure illness and diseases; and of course is important in baptism by immersion. Some members use it in less formal domestic situations; such as sprinkling around the house for protection; used in bath and rubbed on the body to consecrate oneself entirely or repel witches; or rubbed on and drunk for healing purposes especially by barren women.⁷⁶ The cultic use of water in these Churches is natural to the Yoruba or most Africans, because it is an active feature of the traditional religion.⁷⁷

Sacred Actions. With pride, members of the African Independent Churches say: "We praise God with claps, jumps, bows, hallelujah; hossana, hurrah, laughter, singing, dancing, organ and drumming."

The claps follow no rhythm, the jumps are simple and vigorous, standing exercises, the bows are prostrations with the forehead to the ground while the hallelujahs and hurrahs are loud and exclamatory. Most of the actions are explained as praising God or expression of human joy before him, and biblical instances are adduced; jumping they claim demonstrates triumph over enemies or difficulties. The rubbing of the mouth on the ground as practiced by some of the churches signifies humility confession and cleansing.⁷⁸

Dancing. Contrary to the common assumption that the African Independent Churches, freed from Western suppressions, cannot worship without breaking into dancing, they do have services and occasions in which any suggestion of dancing does not take place.

However, dancing accompanied by singing and drumming occurs at some point in most services. Sometimes it is restrained and brief, into token form, at other times vigorous and prolonged. At certain times an individual will pass into trance or possession and speak in tongues, while worshippers from all ages from the apostle to the toddler are taken over in a crescendo of noise and movement. Those upon whom the Spirit has fallen during the frenzy retain some measure of control or are protected by their friends. The dancing is corporated and most individuals dance before the Lord rather than with one another in the social manner.

The main aim of dancing seems to be the expression of praise and joy in the presence of God, though some treat it, like the organ music in a Traditional Church, as an end in itself. There is something of the same suggestion in the remarks about "dancing away their sorrows" or

"perspiring their sins away" although these pronounce popular attitudes rather than the policy of the Churches.

Drumming and Clapping. The musical rhythm of most of the African Independent Churches in their initial stages was clapping. Drums only came in to accompany singing and then followed dancing, except perhaps in Lent when worship is more subdued. the different purposes of drumming are "hot," to induce the Spirit, or "cool" just to keep the rhythm.

Hymns and Shouts. In the early years of the African Independent Church movement, hymns, tunes, choruses from the Traditional Churches were used. These were often sung without drums or other instruments except probably the organ and especially the harmonium. It would be significant to observe that it was when these Churches had their own hymn books, with their own compositions, in addition to sometimes Western hymns and tunes, that they really sprang to life, and achieved their peculiarity as being indigenous.

Sometimes, as earlier mentioned, in Lent, some hymns are sung in quieter manner, without drums or clapping and dancing, more in the tradition of a distinct type of serious and solemn music which is found among the Yoruba.⁸⁰

Singing may be led by a robed choir, and there is often a precentor, a man or woman who shouts each line in a high and rapid voice as the congregation is commencing it, to provide for the illiterates or the lack of hymn books. A single hymn may be prolonged by several repetitions of the whole hymn or selected verses. In agreement with African tradition, special songs are composed for particular occasions

or to honor individuals, and there is no hesitation about singing these in worship. Some African lyrics and choruses composed by Africans are also being used. These are sung at almost any point in the service, sometimes spontaneously or at the direction of the leader, as part of an individual's thanksgiving, or during the sermon to illustrate or confirm a point. At times one of such songs is maintained for up to five minutes, with increasing intensity until some become possessed under its hypnotic effect. Their value is being well illustrated by a West African:

The shouts touch the deepest religious feelings . . . more than any other form of Christian hymnsinging---They are easily memorized and easily translated into the vernaculars of the country and the illiterate can understand them as the fully lettered.⁸¹

Revivals. Revival (Yoruba = *Ìsọjì*) is a constant theme of the African Independent Churches, thereby becoming one of their central practical tenets. Pastors and elders of the Churches preach revival and the initiative is usually given to the youths to implement the injunction. From the standpoint of most of the Churches, this important activity is a function of the praying bands. They sponsor or support an evangelistic party; a prophet, or an evangelist who as a response to an instruction in a vision goes to a town or a stipulated area to preach and hold services.

Oke Anu at Ibadan, Nigeria, one of the branches of the Christ Apostolic Church was one of the churches founded by the evangelist--(or revivalist, Yoruba = *Oníṣọjì*) prophet Durojaiye through a revival in 1961. In organizing the Church, he has been immensely assisted by a body of young helpers, youths, like those who participate in the praying

bands. Once in a quarter for three days there is a special revival. Leaflets inviting everyone to the meeting are printed in both English and Yoruba. It urges those people under peril; tortured by sin; witchcrafts and any other sufferer to come to Jesus Christ for deliverance and salvation. Peel, writing in 1968, reports that the Sunday morning congregations number over 1,000, and the early morning revival (at 7 a.m. each day) attracts regularly about 200 people.⁸²

SUMMARY

Christianity had been preached and practiced in Nigeria for over fifty years before the country was amalgamated in 1900. A tremendous proportion of conversion was witnessed about this time (1900) when the colonial administration initiated new changes such as indirect rule, new roads, and the railway; the expansion of education to supply the clerks needed by the administration and, above all, the rapid development of a cash economy. These innovations had the greatest impact in Southern Nigeria, for example, Iléṣà, Ondo, Ekiti, where the youth enthusiastically joined the new religions, especially Christianity. Their move was considered as an identification with all that was modern and progressive, and they also felt that being a Christian would give them both material benefits and much more eternal salvation. Religiously, the God whom the missionaries and the church institutions preached was more powerful than the many deities of the old religion.

For over fifty years now of development and change, the African Independent Churches have been one of the most important strains of African Christianity, and one whose characteristics have been in some measure significant for all. They have through their main doctrines,

well established and, fixed practices; and through their phenomenological expansion convinced many observers and scholars that they are fundamentally religious in nature, and must be so understood. Through their worship services, we learn how people communicate with God rather than receiving communication about him. Here we find an African voice and body expressing in its own way the praises of an African heart for the religious blessing it had received. The fullness of participation for example is made possible by the marriage of rest and action to produce a wholeness of worship adequate for every mood and need of African life, and it should be recognized both as a rich and complex liturgical achievement, and as an Africanization of Christian worship at the deepest levels. The conclusive viewpoint is put most eloquently into the mouth of a Northumbrian traditional priest converted to Christianity:

the religion that we have hitherto professed seems valueness and powerless. None . . . has been more devoted to the service of the gods than myself, yet there are many . . . who receive greater honours and who are more successful in all their undertakings. Now, if the God had any power, they would surely have favoured myself, who have been more zealous in their service. Therefore, if on examination these new teachings are found to be better and more effectual, let us not hesitate to accept them.⁸³

For the African Independent Churches therefore, a Yoruba saying would suffice: "If the cap fits, wear it." Their emergence and existence is of immense benefit to the African continent, and the whole of Christendom. Indeed as Parrinder puts it, they are "an important factor in the religious scheme."⁸⁴ They surely have to be reckoned with.

These Churches exhibit some sense of a revelation of the numinous or the divine, and some response in worship or praise, in

prayer, trust, or obedience; they seek some religious blessing of power or illumination for the human situation. To deny them facilities for worship, or to ridicule their convictions about their relationship with the divine realm, would be to strike at the core of their existence. They are rightly called African religious movements, with the further qualification that they are new or modern movements in contradistinction to the traditional religions of Africa.

NOTES

¹ Geoffrey Parrinder, Religion in an African City (London: Oxford University Press, 1953) pp. 106-9.

² See Chapter 1, page 5.

³ The underlining in this reference is mine. See, H.W. Turner, African Independent Church (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) II, xvi.

⁴ As a Yoruba and also a student of the Yoruba language, I categorically say that Oosthuizen's meaning of the word Aladura as "owners of prayer" is wrong because that is a literal translation of the word. See G.C. Oosthuizen, Post-Christianity in Africa: A Theological and Anthropological Study (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) p. 60.

⁵ J.D.Y. Peel, Aladura: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba (London: Oxford University Press, 1968) p. 119.

⁶ H.W. Turner, II, 69.

⁷ Ibid., II, 69-70.

⁸ John B. Grimley and Gordon E. Robinson, Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966) p. 301.

⁹ Akin Omoyajowo, "The Aladura Churches in Nigeria since Independence" in E. Fashole-Luke, and others, Christianity in Independent Africa (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978) p. 96.

¹⁰ John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (London: Heinemann, 1969) p. 233.

¹¹ Turner, II, xvii.

¹² Ibid., II, xvii; also Parrinder, p. 126-130.

¹³ Turner, II, xviii.

¹⁴ See Chapter 2, pp. 29-33 of this work.

¹⁵ Oosthuizen, p. 52.

¹⁶ Parrinder, p. 107-114. Peel, p. 55-57. Turner, I, 4-6.

Turner here considers the rejection of a "marriage discipline" that is, monogamy as opposed to polygamy as stipulated by the missionaries, an issue of Spiritual independence by the dissenters, I think this is a socio-cultural factor rather than a spiritual issue.

¹⁷Quoted from Parrinder, p. 109.

¹⁸Peel, p. 56.

¹⁹P.A. Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria (London: Cass, 1926) II, 120-3.

²⁰G.O.M. Tasie, Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta (Leiden: Brill, 1978) pp. ix, 166ff.

²¹Ibid., p. 176.

²²C.P. Groves, The Planting of Christianity in Africa, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958) IV, 126.

²³Peel, p. 61ff; Turner, I, 9-10.

²⁴H.W. Turner, I, 10; also Grimley and Robinson, p. 304-5.

²⁵The best and most classical documented account of the history and life of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, is that produced by Peel, passim. Also for this section see, Turner, I, 11-16; Grimley and Robinson, p. 306-7.

²⁶Omoyajowo, p. 97.

²⁷Grimley and Robinson, p. 305.

²⁸Turner, I, 12-13.

²⁹Dr. Omoyajowo's findings regarding the patrons of the Aladura Churches, particularly during the colonial era, seems to be sharply different from some other scholars. To his judgement, those who got converted into the Aladura Churches in pre-independent days, "were mostly under-privileged." But, according to him, with the attainment of independence, the situation changed. First, it was an opportunity to escape the unfavourable and spiteful attitude of the expatriate overloads. Apart from the Apostolic Church which accepted European and Western missionaries to escape cold persecution from government officials, all the other Aladura Churches refused to yield to such temptations. Then, with the attainment of independence in Nigeria, the psychological fear of belonging to a church that was "not recognized" by the government because it was not under "proper control" disappeared.

Those government officials and members of other churches who had nursed secret interest in the movement began to manifest adherence openly. See Omojayowo, pp. 97-8.

³⁰C.G. Baeta, Prophetism in Ghana (London: SCM Press, 1962) p. 143.

³¹F.B. Welbourn, East African Rebels (London: SCM Press, 1961) p. 11.

³²Peel, p. 91ff.

³³Turner, I, 16-17.

³⁴Grimley and Robinson, p. 305.

³⁵See Chapter 2, pp. 21-5.

³⁶Peel, p. 60ff.

³⁷Ibid., p. 75.

³⁸Ibid., p. 92.

³⁹Ibid., p. 292.

⁴⁰Edmund Ilogu, Christianity and Igbo Culture (New York: Nok, 1974) p. 61.

⁴¹Peel, p. 65.

⁴²Turner, II, 83-4; see also W.J. Hollenweger, The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973) p. 291ff, and 321-2.

⁴³Hollenweger, p. 315.

⁴⁴Walter Hines Sims, ed., Baptist Hymnal (Nashville: Convention Press, 1956) No. 204.

⁴⁵Anglican Hymn Book (London: Church Book Room Press, 1974) No. 509.

⁴⁶Hollenweger, p. 319.

⁴⁷Turner, II, 339.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Hollenweger, p. 345.

⁵⁰Turner, II, 122.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare (London: Longman, 1962) p. 77-78; also J.O. Lucas, p. 71-86.

⁵³Baeta, p. 58, 86.

⁵⁴Hollenweger, p. 330.

⁵⁵Peel, p. 146-7.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 147.

⁵⁷Hollenweger, p. 342.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 342.

⁵⁹Peel, p. 128.

⁶⁰Turner, II, 141.

⁶¹I.B. Akinyele, The Place of Divine Healing in the Church (Ibadan: 1962), passim. Oba I.B. Akinyelé was once the head of the Christ Apostolic Church. See also p. 15.

⁶²Thus Pastor J.O. Sanya to the Apostolic Church Missionary Committee, Bradford, 3 August 1938. Odubanjo Papers. D.O. Odubanjo was one of the founding leaders and Pastors of the Christ Apostolic Church.

⁶³The African Pastors to the Apostolic Church Missionary Committee, Bradford, and its reply, 28 June 1939.

⁶⁴Hollenweger, p. 359.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 358.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Roche Report, Frontiers of Clinical Psychiatry 7/4, 15:2 (1970) 5f.

⁶⁸Hollenweger, p. 399.

⁶⁹See pp. 104-113 of this work.

⁷⁰R.G. Lienhardt, "Some African 'Christians'," Blackfriars, 33:382 (January 1952) 14-21.

⁷¹See also Turner, II, Chapter 10, *passim*.

⁷²William A. Reyburn, "Cultural Implications of an Indigenous Church," Practical Anthropology, 5 (1958) 55.

⁷³Turner, II, 101-4.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, II, 105-7.

⁷⁵E.O. Adeleke Adejobi, The Bible Speaks on the Church of the Lord (Lagos: 1945) p. 8.

⁷⁶Baeta, Appendix B (3), (p. 156), for prayers of Musamo Disco Christo church before similar use of water.

⁷⁷M.J. Herskovitts, The Myth of the Negro Past (New York: Peter Smith Publishers, 1941) p. 232-5; Geoffrey Parrinder, African Traditional Religion (London: S.P.C.K., 1968) p. 49ff; and for barren women using holy water, see Ulli Beir, "The Egungun Cult," Nigeria, Lagos, 51 (1956) 389; Idowu, p. 73.

⁷⁸Ephraim Andersson, Messianic Movements in the Lower Congo (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells boktr., 1958) p. 201, n. 2; also Baeta, p. 21, 26, n. 2.

⁷⁹See also, H. Weman, African Music and the Church in Africa (Uppsala: Lundequistska bokhan deln, 1960) pp. 58-67.

⁸⁰K. Carrol, "Yoruba Religious Music," African Music, 1:3 (1956) 46.

⁸¹I.M. Ndanema, "The Martha Davies Confidential Benevolent Association," Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion, 3:2 (1961) 66. See also C.G. Williamson, "The Lyric in the Fante Methodist Church," Africa, 28:2 (April 1958) 126-33; and H. Wolff, "Rara: A Yoruba Chant," Journal of African Languages, 1:1 (1962) 42-54.

⁸²Peel, p. 171-9.

⁸³Bede, A History of the English Church and People, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955) II, 13.

⁸⁴Parrinder, Religion in an African City, p. 107.

CHAPTER V

STRATEGIES FOR THE TRADITIONAL CHURCHES

FOR THE HEALING MINISTRY

PRAYERFULNESS

Karl Rahner once described prayer as "the opening of the heart to God"; while F. Heiler describes it as "an expression of religious experience."¹ John S. Mbiti says "that prayer forms an integral part of any viable religious system."²

While it is not expected of the writer to discuss at a great length this vital aspect of man's religion, it would be necessary to say at this point that this is one of the many ways by which the Traditional Churches can squarely face the challenges of their African Independent counterparts in professing their faith as believers who also rely on God to solve all their problems. If prayer is indeed "the opening of the heart to God," if its practice implies God's presence in human experience and God's personal responsiveness to the individual, both the clergy and laity of the Traditional Churches should be thankful to God for revealing to them one of their weaknesses, and then ask the Deity faithfully and diligently to guide and assist them as they embark upon making right the irregularity in one of their ministries--the healing ministry.

For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who, in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:15-16).

THE PROPER ATTITUDE

Humility.

"Of making of books there is no end . . . " Ec. 12:12. A person learns everyday from cradle to grave; and members of the Traditional Churches should constantly be aware of this fact.

The clergy, laity and the generality of the Traditional Churches should do away with any of their inhibiting dispositions, including any feeling of superiority and in the footsteps of Jesus Christ approach with reverence and humility, the African Independent Churches, learn from them in more practical ways, why the latter appeal more to Africans in the various ministries of the Church. The Traditional Churches are hereby admonished to develop more respectful attitudes in appreciating and implementing whatever contribution their African Independent friends have to offer for the Church of Christ. In reaching for the best, that which is of enduring value in religion, the enquirer, or seeker like the Traditional Churches are urged to tread softly and cautiously, because they are treading on people's dreams.³ R.S. Rattray is a good example in this regard during his approach to the study of the religion of the Akan. He reports:

I approached these old people and this difficult subject [their religious beliefs] in the spirit of one who came to them as a seeker after truths, the key to which I told them they alone possessed, which not all the learning nor all the books of the white (man) could ever give to me.

I made it clear to them [the Ashanti] that I asked access to their religious rite . . . for this reasons I attended their ceremonies with all the reverence and respect I could well accord to something which I felt to have been already very old, before the religion of my country had yet been born as a new thought, yet not so entirely

new, but that even its roots stretched back and were fed from the same stream which still flows in Ashanti today.⁴

Humility is also needed for Pastors and Church leaders including the laity to listen and interact with each other as they go about this common particular task entrusted to them.

Willingness to Learn.

It is often said that "someone can take a horse or a donkey to the stream but he or she cannot force it to drink." Yes the horse or donkey must be willing to drink!

As seekers after truth; as enquirers for that which will enhance the promotion of God's kingdom on earth, the Traditional Churches must be willing and ready to learn. Those appointed to study and investigate the proper avenues for the healing ministry in the Traditional Church must not appear to know too much before they even begin. The wrong approach will be with a pre-judged mind and pre-conceived notion. The right approach in studying about other people's religion, with an intent of arriving at a balanced opinion is to avoid a biased comparison, witting or unwitting. The tendency for a hasty and irrational judgement should be avoided as much as possible. Similarly, too much show of knowledge and cocksureness of other peoples beliefs and practices should be curbed and avoided altogether. Professor Cantwell Smith's advice is again recommended here:

Particularly in a study of a major civilization other than one's own, and most of all, of the religions of that civilization, one must learn not to set out seeking answers to questions that one has formulated previously. One must learn rather--slowly, perceptively, painfully, creatively--to ask new questions; to discern new categories; to sense new visions . . . One of the most important requirements of our study is a recognition that we do not

quite know what it is that we are observing--so that our first struggle is to find out.⁵

Sympathy and Patience.

In the delicate but important task of the study of any religious phenomenon, just as we have at hand--healing--enquirers and investigators need to be reminded that the enterprise can only be properly accomplished if the study is made from the inside and that with caution, patience, and sympathy of purpose. May it be said that it is only those who are willing and ready to allow truth to reveal itself to them, and those who painstakingly are ready to enter into the feelings (Greek = syn - pathos) of others--the worshippers--as much as possible, in the parlance of the apostle Paul, "sit where they sit " that can make the best out of the study. Any element in religion must be seen "in terms of its own perspective" if what is studied can be the real thing. Sympathy and patience therefore presuppose an attitude which exposes itself to reality and a mind which accepts without inhibitions revelation in the actual situation.

Openness.

For serious scholars and investigators of religion, what is important is not what they think about the religion or what other people say about the religion is important, but what the religion says about itself, is the most important, and it is upon this self-proclamation that all other opinions be based. Therefore, scholars in the study of religion should always avoid taking appearance for reality. This approach could be very misleading, since the first appearance, or the

"love at first sight" could be deceptive. Scholars in the study of religion should avoid the temptation of generalisation, thinking that a particular form of religion, represents that religion in its entirety.

The rich panorama of man's religious life over the centuries presents the observer with a bewildering variety of phenomena, and the studies of those phenomena present him with a cacophony of interpretation. Those who would understand, and those who would intelligently participate, are confronted with a task of no mean proportions.⁶

It will be highly rewarding if the scholar of the study of religion avoids self-made obstacles as the person endeavours in the field; and if he or she does not accomodate for any moment the spirit of cultural pride and disdain.

Education.

The healing ministry of the Church suffers a lot from inadequate attention in the Traditional Churches owing to ignorance on the part of some members of the clergy and the laity regarding the activity. This fact in itself justifies the purpose of this project. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" Hos. 4:6. The premise of education in this regard varies, ranging from the instruction and enlightenment of the entire congregation of local churches to preparing and equipping personnel and clergy for the task.

For the Entire Congregation. It is of utmost importance for the generality of the Church to know that the Christian religion is one which is living and organic. Any religion which is worth study, practice and adhering to is one which is practiced by living men and women. One of the best means by which people can check if their

religion is worth practicing is to determining whether it offers them any spiritual or material benefits (salvific values). A Yoruba saying goes: "Orisa ti a sin ti o Ko ti ko gbeni, ki a ko o sile" meaning "A divinity which is being worshipped, but which refuses to provide any support for the adherent, should be done away with." The Christian religion in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, should be taught and practiced in its simplest and natural forms, as being salvific, which from the standpoint of the writer surely is; and one of the ways by which this could be demonstrated is through the healing ministry.

Not a Confrontation, but Supportive of the Medical Profession.

In the African Independent Churches, where the use of medicine and modern science is not encouraged, there are those whose professions are in the medical field. In the Traditional Churches the presence and membership of medical practitioners are well recognized. Advocating and suggesting the Churches intensive participation in the health care; clinical and pastoral care of its members and its neighbours should not be viewed as a confrontation or hostility towards the medical profession. It should not be considered either as an alternative to the practice of medicine; but as a supportive venture; indeed as a co-partner in the care of souls, in the footsteps of the Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. Hollenweger says:

Many people may learn that prayer is concerned with concrete matters from prayers in accordance with James 5, more than from numerous sermons. For people who have difficulty with abstract thought and live in the age of illustrated papers and television, visions are an important means of communication.⁷

Churches Should not Scoff at Traditional Medicine. Traditional

Churches and their congregations should not scoff at African traditional

(indigenous) medicine which are purely preventive, curative and helpful and which are free from syncretistic connotations. I personally think that if African Christians can use European or Western medicine for their headaches and colds, it should be quite legitimate and proper for them to be able to treat their stomach-aches; ulcers, and flus with African traditional medicines (herbs and other techniques), provided these medicines are dispensed with the proper instructions and dosages.

At a health seminar organized by the Christian Medical Commission, the medical arm of the World Council of Churches in Bagorone, Botswana, the Church in Africa was called upon to change its negative attitude towards traditional medicine and to accept traditional healers as part of the medical (healing) team. The meeting was attended by medical doctors, clergymen, health administrators and traditional healers from all over Africa. Among participants at the seminar included traditional healers from Botswana, Ghana, and Cameroun. Papers were read by traditional healers from Ghana and Cameroun. The camerounian traditional healer Mr. Mnoko Zaacs Ngaaje claimed in his paper that traditional healing has for so long been unacceptable in Africa, owing to the peoples ignorance of its operations. This fact has also led many to refer to it as "superstitious," and its practitioners as "witch doctors."⁸

Fanaticism and Extremism Should be Checked. In educating and encouraging members of the Traditional Churches on the opportunities of the healing ministry of the Church, the extremist and fanatical stance of some of the African Independent Churches on healing should not be entertained. Such attitudes include praying only to God and rejecting

any form of medicine, Western or African for curing diseases and sicknesses.

Considering the African Independent Churches as models, particularly in the healing ministry of the Church, does not imply swallowing gullibly and indiscriminately all that they believe, teach and practice. Considering them as models involves careful sympathetic study and investigation of all that they do and deriving, therefrom, all that is Christian and culturally acceptable and practicable. With this it is hoped that the Traditional Churches in Africa will emerge as the best Christian communities fit for Africa and its peoples.

Training of Volunteers and Other Healing Ministry Personnel.

Christianity in Africa is expanding and growing in numbers that arrest observers curiosity and attention. Both the Traditional and African Independent Churches do feel the impact of the phenomenon in terms of expansion in structures and need for personnel to care for the newly baptised members. Yet, the Church's mission in the World will not permit a clergyman or congregation to spend full time with ecclesiastical housekeeping at the expense of the care and nurture of souls, for whom Christ died.⁹ This seeming paradox is the one which reminds and which re-iterates the need of the lay ministry in the Church.

Nowhere does the New Testament advocate that a Christian pastor is to monopolize the ministry. The minister's role according to the Bible includes "equipping [preparing] the saints"¹⁰ for their own task of ministering--in health; in clinical care; in family life; in daily work; in the church; and in the world. Hendrik Koester's A Theology of the Laity reminds us that "the Church is Ministry," and that the services of

clergy and laity "are both aspects of the same diakonia each in their proper sphere and calling."¹¹ The worlds of the professional clergy and the responsible layperson intersect at the point of what they both really are - the people of God! The central affirmation of the New Testament is that God calls men and women from Spiritual death into Christian festival of life. Those cut off from true humanity are summoned to a participant style of Christian living by God's sovereign grace (Matt. 22:3; Rom. 8:30). Such a life is a calling to identity (I Peter 2:9-10); to community (I Cor. 1:9), and to responsibility (Romans 12:1-2). The Christian's vocation is to "lead a life worthy of [his other] calling" (Eph. 4:1), and to perform the tasks "which the Lord has assigned to him or her, and in which God has called the person" (I Cor. 7:17). Every Christian not only those who are ordained, is to participate in the church's mission of reconciliation and Soul Care. Christ calls his people to care and simultaneously beckons those in the world to respond to their concern. The motives of giving and receiving are operative together.

Members of the Traditional Churches in Nigeria should therefore be called upon and encouraged to submit themselves and donate money and other necessary materials in order to meet the dearth of workers, and facilities needed for the various ministries of the Church, in particular the healing ministry. The training of workers for the Church must by all means keep pace with its expansion, if the Nigerian Church will remain a community of healthy men and women.

Following the response of the Call to serve as volunteers or as full-time workers in the Church, the prospective personnel - in all areas of healing; pastoral care and counseling - should be well equipped

and adequately trained in order to be able to enter into the field - teaching them to be sensitive enough to discern that which is the metaphysic of religion, that which makes religion religion and the individual and social response or reaction which is, paradoxically the factor in consequence of which one religion is different from the other. These workers whether volunteers or full-time personnel should be given the proper incentives, good salaries and adequate working conditions.

"Do Not Quench the Spirit:" Attitude to Various Interested Church Members.

The attitude and approach in this regard will include humility, openness, sympathy, patience on the part of church leaders to listen and respond to enthusiastic and critical church members on the subject of the healing ministry in the Church.

Love. Love has many dimensions and could also be approached from different perspectives. From the standpoint of my thesis, it may be stressed that divine love should be the Traditional Churches motivating purpose, and not necessarily human need. From the early church period to the present, the reconciling and sustaining love of God has motivated spiritual service in Christ's stead (John 15:17; II Cor. 5:12,19). The Apostle John declared:

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love remains in death. . . . By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? . . . Let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth. (I John 3:14-18).

Christian love is the primary generating environment of true pastoral labour. Fear cautions against such activities, operates in

order to save the self, and thereby rejects the "other." Love, which transmutes our human incapacities, tunes our care to the inner tempo of people's spiritual needs. Many people have been spared suffering by the preventive power of wise love. On the other hand, love listens with a delicate ear to the often disguised signals which people who want desperately to be heard and understood beam our way. Sometimes it is advisable to ask: "What are those around us really trying to say with their words and ways?" Bruder once said that

if we maintain our distance, it will only be to perpetuate the shut-up-ness of our deeply troubled people until it must become the demonic spoken of by Kierkegaard and find itself expressed as shut-up-ness unfreely revealed.¹²

In their bid to implement and organize the healing ministry in the Church, church leaders as well as the laity should allow the enduring love of Christ and that which they have for the gospel to direct them. Many of the advocates of new programs including spiritual awakening in Nigerian Churches are composed of the youths. Church authorities will need to deal with them in love and sympathy; with maturity and understanding, if the Church is to remain a healthy community of believers. Leaders need love and tact to cope with the exuberance and enthusiasm of the youths and other advocates as well. These advocates need the encouragement, guidance, and support of the Church authorities, and these should be granted to them.

Critics, and antagonists of the healing scheme may arise. Church authorities would also need love and firmness to handle such situations. The enthusiastic youths and other interested Church members should on their part learn to approach the Church leaders and authorities with respect and trust as they present their ideas and suggestions.

Mutual Understanding. As ministers and Church authorities employ human-science resources in dealing with persons, it is not as I have earlier stated to be construed as a "theological invasion of anthropological territory."¹³ Rather, biblical anthropology (which has a past, present, and future of its own) engages in dialogue with cultural disciplines which have provided new ways of thinking about persons in communities and new modes of working with them. Psychological dimensions of human reality cannot be overlooked; yet neither are they the center and circumference of existence. The Clergy are to view "cultural manifestations with Christian eyes" observes Emile Cailliet. Appreciative of scientific penetration into the depth of reality and the fresh information disclosed thereby, he writes:

It would be a strange thing to deal with culture without ever learning anything from culture . . . The knowledge of faith is no substitute for that of the specialist in his field, or of the man of culture in his cultural circle.¹⁴

There is therefore a need for a mutual exchange of information and understanding between theologians including Church leaders on one hand, and scientists in an atmosphere of mutual respect and love on the other. All involved in the scheme need to be reminded that the revelation of God in His Word does not invalidate scientific research and new understanding. Science, properly considered, can actually become the servant rather than the enemy of the Christian faith. God's design is that science, like every human discipline, should become a divine service. Scientific findings, while immensely helpful, cannot be absolutized into a new faith, for they are descriptive and proximate, not ultimate and absolute. What is true of theology is also true of science, all of humanity's partial wisdom falls under the judgement of

God. While science's highest achievements have corrected our misconceptions and enriched our lives science alone can never sustain life in its eternal dimensions. This in itself is the premise of faith. Similarly, the organization and implementation of the healing ministry in the Traditional Churches in Nigeria should serve as a good forum for both advocates of the scheme and Church leaders to work together. The good idea should not be allowed to develop into a schismatic situation.

CONTEXTUALISATION AND INDIGENISATION

The relevance or irrelevance of the Church in Nigeria today will depend on the Church's re-interpretation of its witness and mission. The Church in Nigeria must be seen to be effectively addressing itself to the realities of the pressing, cultural, religious and social problems if it is to retain its credibility in its various ministries. The Church in Nigeria, needs to be able to re-define its theology of ministry and mission in the midst of historical, ideological and political changes that are sweeping over the continent.

The Church in Nigeria needs to be reminded that knowing that a person is social, God Himself entered by the process of the Incarnation into the life of men and women, which He endeavours to redeem, "a life lived out in an inescapable network of relations."¹⁵

. . . the Church has to lose itself in the world if it wants to be effective in its outreach. Instead of being closed in order to preserve, the Church should be open in order to receive.

. . . the Church as the Body of Christ must take note of the people amongst whom it moves as an institution.¹⁶

In an attempt to liberate the gospel (good news) from certain cultural and historical impotence, the stress in relation to ministry and evangelism has shifted from indigenization to contextualization.

While the concept of indigenization has been accepted as the most appropriate way of ensuring that the gospel has taken root in a given context, it has, nevertheless, been accused of being static and in danger of being past-oriented.¹⁷ The concept has been interpreted to refer only to the churches in Asia and Africa. Contextualization is a new concept which has been introduced in missionary circles to refer to all that was meant by indigenization. It is an all-embracing term which is non-discriminatory. It includes all aspects of ministry and evangelization process, with a dynamism which is open to change and which is future-oriented. Before efforts towards the contextualization of the gospel is made by the African Church, Smalley's ideas should be considered. He says that:

an indigenous church is precisely one in which the changes which take place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit meet the needs and fulfill the meanings of that society and not of any outside group.¹⁸

In its effort towards contextualization of the gospel, the Nigerian Church has to realise and demonstrate that it is not tied to any particular social structure "but subjects ever structure to the judgement of God." Indigenization it has been suggested, should be done by nationals, themselves,¹⁹ otherwise it will be superficial. It is not merely a matter of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation. After all, many Traditional Churches, for example the Anglican Church in Nigeria today, is autonomous, but still has many vestiges of the parent (Western) life-style which are actually not suitable for the growth expected of her. A truly indigenous church as Reyburn puts it,

is a group of believers who live out their life, including their socialised Christian activity, in the patterns of the local society, and for whom any transformation of that society comes out of their felt needs under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures.²⁰

Liturgy.

The analytical study done on the African Independent Churches in Chapter 4 of this project reveal that greater attention needs to be given to the working out of a liturgy suitable to the Church in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. E.C. Parker, writing on the All-Africa Conference held at Kampala April 20-30, 1963, states that, apart from elimination of missionary control, the identification of the Church with African struggle,

We want a Church that is African in philosophy and practice . . . development of an African theology, an African liturgy, African translations of scripture and literature, African forms of worship and administration.²¹

In a similar vein, Monsignor Alphonse Mulders Director of the Roman Catholic Missiological Institute, Nijmegen, Holland says:

A missionary liturgy celebrated in good form should directly give to the neophyte a consciousness of having found in the Church of Christ not only the true Faith, but also the possibility of encountering God and of rendering to Him true worship--worship in which the genuine aspirations of His cultural heritage find their fulfillment.²²

No church can discard liturgy, because in it public worship of the congregation finds expression. Vilmos Vajta defines liturgy as,

the form in which the congregation receives God's word in Word and Sacrament, and in which it, at the same time, clothes its prayer, its praises, and its confession.²³

Similarly the relation between theology and liturgy is of vital importance, because liturgy is not autonomous, but must be based on sound theological presuppositions. The theology on which worship has to be based therefore needs a thorough study before the formation of liturgy can be sound and effective. Needless to reiterate the fact that amongst the Traditional Churches in Africa, there abounds a legalistic

and formless liturgical order, and an imported and badly adapted liturgy. Liturgy, we need to remind ourselves, is not a fixed form applicable everywhere under all circumstances; it is only a form, an earthly vessel, which may differ and change. It is not a gift to be accepted in a certain form as from God Himself--an impression left by many missionaries.

The liturgical creativity of the spirit in the contemporary congregation dare not be disregarded. It is therefore always dangerous to enforce such forms upon a congregation which were produced in another era.²⁴

Legalism in this respect "forces the Gospel from its throne and places the earthly vessel in the place of the eternal."²⁵ Liturgy has much to do with love of one's neighbour, because the gathering together of people for worship demands an external order. It does not exist for the sake of the congregation: it is a means of proclamation.

Liturgy is the proclamation of the glorious deeds of God. Where liturgy is understood, as something other than proclamation it has lost its heart.²⁶

Because it has to do with proclamation, all genuine Christian liturgy must have a Christological centre.

In its emphasis on the neighbours, liturgy is bound up with the community, an important characteristic of African society.²⁷ Scripture, symbols, poetry, song, dance and pictures all have to be interpreted in the African context. The problem in Africa is that the Gospel has often been reduced to a Western ideology, a packed Christianity instead of relevant Christianity. Owing to the factors of change, and because as practical theology, it is a vitally important means of communicating the Christian message, liturgy has to be periodically examined and re-evaluated with the environment and the community which it serves.

Both in the attempt of formulating and re-examining the liturgy for the Nigerian Church, "the ruling motive [as Idowu contends] should be that the liturgy must be written primarily for the Church in Nigeria, and for the use of Nigerian worshippers."²⁸ Thus, not only because of the different existential situation but because of the Church's responsibility to the world, the liturgy must fit in with the specific genius and characteristics of the environment in which the Church in Nigeria finds itself. Many people contend that while the Church universal might expect a renewal of the contemplative life from Asia, she might similarly expect a renewal of liturgy from Africa, owing to the continent's rich resources in her cultural heritage. This only buttresses the point that the liturgical acts be taken up earnestly and more seriously, making it a concern of the people, of the community, a dramatic event, a "give and take," between priest and people, where the people are given the right of expressing in their own spontaneous way, their experience of God within a certain frame.

Music. Africa is a continent of songs, dance and musical instruments. It is a continent of language and languages. Its religion is unthinkable without music and singing, without rhythm and colour.²⁹ Here lies the core of Africa's artistic inheritance and nothing was sadder than the missionary failure to open a door whereby at least some of the wealth might pass across into the worship of the Traditional Churches. As was in the missionary era, the drum is only occasionally heard in some Traditional Churches today; only the harmonium or the large pipe organs accompanying carefully translated European hymns sung to the tunes of the West. The result of the neglect as observed is frequently deplorable since African languages could not be bent to

European hymn tunes, although the Latin of the plainsong might enter more deeply.

There must therefore be an unrestrained introduction of the drum into Church worship and dancing too. This calls for the necessity of producing a new vernacular liturgy if public worship is to remain the decisive centre of church life and if the musical revolution is to be significant for the effect it will have on the broader spectrum of Christian living. One of the forms that could be included in the Christian form of worship is the use of lyrics.³⁰ Stating that African music is the concern of everyone, and that it should have a place in the Church, Cecil Northcott quotes Henry Wernan who says:

African hymn writing is called for; this art must develop freely according to its own rules, inspired by its own imagery and its own thought-world. . . . Any new African hymn book must be created by Africans, and it is the first task of the leaders of the churches to provide the inspiration to this end. This ought to be possible without any admixture of Western influence, as the growth of African art has demonstrated.³¹

Prayer. It is in the experience of vernacular prayer, both public and private, both formal and informal, and in the spirituality which grows up from such experience that the real roots for an authentic African Christianity will most surely be found. This with the recent issues, raises the question of language. Spontaneity cannot find expression in a foreign, dead language. Dramatic happenings can only take place in earnest when they can be enacted in the mother tongue (vernacular).

Liturgical and musical expression is all the more sincere and profound when the language used is understood by all. It is the only means to authentic living expression. Using the forms of expression

proper to a culture or subculture can mean leading the community to fulfill their liturgical role by making that full, conscious and active participation which is demanded by the nature of the liturgy itself and which is, by right of baptism, the right and duty of the Christian community.

Freedom of Expression. While recognising the fact that the African Christian must remain spiritually free to be himself, and worship in the ways he or she seems most intelligible; we must realise that it is within the charter of the principles of freedom particularly that of worship, that those who are accustomed and either emotionally or intimately used to the Western forms of worship; or strictly the Anglican or the Presbyterian, or the Methodist; Baptist or Lutheran, should be allowed to worship and fellowship in whatever tradition that they like. They should not become ostracized members of the Church because their churches are going indigenous. The need to be related with "in love and sympathy. Hayward refer to these people as "Africans who desire need and help."³² One of the set prayers of the Anglican Church after all describes God as: "the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service [including worship] is perfect freedom."³³ (Jn. 8:31-36; Rom. 6:15-23). Before God, there is no compulsion to repression. Christianity is as has been said in Freudian language, a religion of the ego, not of the super-ego.

Study and Encourage Cultural Festivals.

Owing to their pietist fervor, the nineteenth and twentieth century Western missionaries to Africa, regarded as of the devil the cultural cum traditional beliefs and practices of their hosts, and so

were consequently rejected. Much has already been written on this in this project and by other scholars.³⁴ Ancestor worship or veneration was condemned, as was participation in cultural and annual festivals and feasts. Belief in witchcraft as earlier mentioned³⁵ was disregarded and often dismissed as an abstract idea. Traditional music used in the cults was outlawed for Christians. Converts were not only to put on European dresses, but also must have European names before being baptised. All natural means of communicating the gospel to the Africans were therefore severed with the result that there was no proper foundation for the Gospel message in the heart of the Africans, consequently a strange God who had nothing to do with the past of the Africans were preached to them. Christianity to most Africans then was a fashionable and status affair, which when observed once in the week, begins and ends within the walls of the church building. Thus it is possible as Idowu says:

for an African to sing lustily in Church, "Other refuge have I none" while still carrying an amulet somewhere on his person, or being able to go out of Church straight to his diviner, without feeling that he is betraying any principle.³⁶

The response again to this situation is that the Churches and peoples in Nigeria and Africa, and indeed in all lands, need to be culturally and traditionally revitalised and made more aware of what is indigenously theirs. Discussing a similar issue, Alward Shorter quotes Vatican II encouraging the Church to "acknowledge, preserve and promote" and in his own words, "the moral good in non-Christian religions"³⁷ Quoting from Sacrosanctum Concilium 65, he also reports the Second Vatican council's recommendation which states that:

In mission lands initiation rites are found in use among individual people. Elements from these, when capable of being adapted to

Christian rituals, may be admitted along with those already found in Christian tradition.³⁸

Many of the traditional beliefs and cultural practices of the Nigerian peoples are quite unique, fine and beautiful, and it is the opinion of the writer that these should be preserved, used and adapted in the Christian religion, as it is practiced among the people. In some practices and rites like the naming of a child and circumcision (to name a few) where both Christianity, Islam, and sometimes Western Culture are agreeable, correlative, or silent, and where the Yoruba for example observe these traditional practices that are not contradictory, they boldly and cheerfully sing:

Àwá o ọ̀rò ilé wa o,	We shall fulfill our traditional rites,
Àwá o ọ̀rò ilé wa o,	We shall fulfill our traditional rites,
Ìgbàgbọ́, kò pé e o	Christianity does not prevent us
Ìgbàgbọ́ kò pé	Christianity does not prevent us
K'awa ma ọ̀soro.	From fulfilling our traditional rites.
Àwá O ọ̀rò ilé wa o,	We shall fulfill our traditional rites,
Àwá o ọ̀rò ilé wa o,	We shall fulfill our traditional rites;
Ìmàlẹ kò pé, e o	Islam does not prevent us,
Ìmàlẹ kó pe k'awa ma ọ̀soro	Islam does not prevent us from
	fulfilling our traditional rites.
Àwá o ọ̀rò ilé wa o.	We shall fulfill our traditional rites.

In pursuance of the revitalisation and the re-awakening of the traditional beliefs and practices of Nigerians, participation in the cultural festivals ought to be encouraged, and a judicious study of the indigenous culture pursued rigorously. However, whenever and wherever any of the practices, customs and traditions, may have been determined

to be threatening or inimical to the general welfare of the society, they should be discarded.

At home, families should be encouraged to share the knowledge and the richness of the traditional culture with each other especially where these interact and compare with Christianity, Islam or other religions. The curriculum for Religious Education in schools, colleges and higher institutions should include that for the instruction in African Traditional Religion, and studies in this should be mandatory for pupils as well as students. Efforts should be geared in disabusing and liberating teachers as well as students from the distortions, the misconceptions; the misrepresentation and the misinterpretation of African religion by the early Western missionaries and writers. Parrinder sometimes wrote:

It is probably true to say that African religion has been more misunderstood, and has suffered more at the hands of the early writers, than any other part of African life. Unhappily old misconceptions linger with us still.³⁴

Mbiti too says:

In spite of all these attacks, traditional religions have survived, they dominate the background of African peoples, and must be reckoned with even in the middle of modern changes.⁴⁰

Dress.

In a similar vein the emphasis on the use of traditional dresses including vestments (where applicable and compatible to universal and Nigerian Christianity) should be made. We have noted in numerous places how Christianity in Nigeria has been associated and paralleled with European form of dress, culture and civilization. Ayandele wrote that "many of [the missionaries] believed that converts who did not drink tea

or wear European clothes could not be genuine Christians,"⁴¹ while Ajayi also reported that

It was permissible perhaps that a Yoruba lady convert should wear her bùbá, and iró and gèlè, but it was more civilized still to wear the Victorian frock, high-necked, long sleeved, reaching down to the ankles.⁴²

Some of the Traditional Churches nursed the idea, maintaining that only those who were "properly dressed" could attend church services while preachers, sidesman and stewards who put on Nigerian dresses while officiating were behaving in ways and manners that were unbecoming to Christianity and unbecoming of church authorities.⁴³

Laity. The way out to all the above false and misconstrued teaching is only to encourage the laity to put on their Nigerian dresses which the creator in his own wisdom had given them, when they attend Church services in their respective working places and also to other places wherever and whenever they wish "All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee."

Clergy. Concerning the dresses (vestments) and insignia of the clergy and officials of the church, appropriate actions should be stepped in this direction. This will include conforming to the guidelines as dictated by the universal tradition of the Christian denomination with a relevant application of the climatic and cultural factors, of the Nigerian Churches, concerned. Idowu's statement has some relevance here. He says:

When the Minister leads in worship, Nigerians like to recognize him by his vestments as also by the way he leads them in worship.⁴⁴

The learned minister suggests that churches can learn from what the Methodist Church in Nigeria is doing in this regard.⁴⁵

Stewardship.

The Church in Africa and in Nigeria cannot be properly effective in her ministry if she continues to depend on foreign aid and personnel assistance, which are usually accompanied with strings and directives, sometimes unsuitable to the needs of the beneficiaries.

The Church in Nigeria must accept the fact that to achieve her self-hood, and be herself she has to provide her own monetary and personnel needs. The much talked about but important Henry Venn's scheme of "self-government, self-support, and self-extension,"⁴⁵ has a great bearing here. "The pastor [said Venn] must be of the people and maintained by them."⁴⁷ "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35)--this is a fact which the Traditional Church in Nigeria needs to teach its members often and repeatedly. The Church in Nigeria is committed to self-reliance if it is to be effective in its efforts to serve itself and its respective communities. They must work. (Jn. 5:7). They must realise that some people (their predecessors--missionaries and indigenes alike) have worked and the indigenes are now entering and continuing with their divine-sanctioned mandate (Mt. 28:19-20; Jn. 4:38).

The philosophy of self-reliance adopted by the African governments demands that the Churches in Africa do all in their power to tap and to mobilize the local resources which are available. The African peoples must be taught and educated to assume their responsibility to support and to run their Churches. They are the Church. They must not sit back, arms folded waiting for help to come from richer sister churches in Europe and America. She will readily

accept and welcome all the legitimate assistance and contributions that these oversea churches can provide. But they must be told that for their churches to grow; not to be crippled and to be effective in their respective ministries they have to learn to support themselves. Writing on a similar subject, Paul Kalanda quotes Alward Shorter who says:

A Church has been created in Africa which can only be sustained in strict bondage,--organizationally, culturally and financially, to the white Church. The problem is how to end this state of eternal juniority.⁴⁸

Professor Idowu's statement alongside with others suggest a solution.

It says:

The Church in Nigeria should rather struggle and suffer in order to live than to continue to receive any kind of help which is likely to continue to fetter, paralyse, or throttle her, and choke life out of her.⁴⁹

Indeed, I think that the solution also include teaching, guiding and leading the people to help themselves.

ACT NOW!

Try.

Since the early years of this century, a lot of things have been said, written and demonstrated about the foreign nature of the Church in Africa. Sometimes the blame has been laid on the Western missionaries; sometimes the various African communities and Churches are said to be guilty.⁵⁰ One thing however is clear, the inadequacies of the Church in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, to the needs and aspirations of the people it exists to serve is glaring. Much has been expended in the form of theorizing. It was time therefore that actions and concrete expressions of the desire to correct these deadly anomalies are set into

motion and maintained.

The Traditional Churches in Nigeria need to be reminded that "the way to prove failure or success is to make a trial for a time and watch."⁵¹ In the process of trying and "doing something," Nigerians should realise that

the burden of giving the Church in Nigeria an indigenous complexion must rest heavily upon Christian Nigerians. No foreigner can do the work for them.⁵²

Introduce Regular Healing Services.

Regular and not occasional or spontaneous services; talks; sermons backed up with practical demonstrations about healing should be made in the Traditional Churches in Nigeria. Particularly emphasis on the subject, preceded by sermons, lectures or talks and backed up with practical demonstrations could be given on special days in the church calendar. These special days will include, Patron Saint days of the healing ministry in the Church. For example, St. Luke, "the evangelist and physician"⁵³ is normally commemorated on the 18th day of October each year.⁵⁴

Another opportunity for highlighting the healing ministry of the Church, theoretically and practically, is when references are made to any of its areas, in the lectionaries of the Traditional Churches, especially those designed for public (corporate) use. By preaching and practising healing, the Traditional Churches in Nigeria, will actually "Let the people understand that God is still alive."⁵⁵

SUMMARY

There can be nothing like religion in the abstract or religion divorced from the worshippers and adherents of that particular faith. Religion also consists of the mind and the consciousness of an individual and the consequent ability to grasp the world of nature and connect this with something through which that world takes a meaning.

In the study of religion and its relationship with the worshipper and adherents, one other important fact worth consideration is change. Because the universe in which a person lives expands and contracts, his or her world-views and approaches, are bound to be considerably affected. This change exhibits itself in multifarious ways. It may be that form of enlightenment which gives a person a better understanding and confirmation of his or her faith; or it may disturb the individual so much that its pervasion is a loss of faith. Without mincing words, a people whose culture has come in contact with another culture can never really be the same again. The culture is either enriched in accordance with its power to withstand the assault of other cultures while assimilating something of their best qualities, or impoverished because of its weakness in consequence of which it submits to them by losing its own originality. The ability to adapt in the face of current circumstances is probably a power inherent in every culture; invariably cultural contact involves addition and subtraction, "give and take."

The realization of the gospel depends on its being incarnated into a particular culture. The preaching of the good news in its various dimensions will continually challenge a culture and demand a

radical "metanoia," a "change of heart," from the aspects that are not in accordance with its standards. While the proclamation will be in terms of the "giving" culture, it must be prepared at all times to allow the response assume its own dress. Culture, in accepting the Kingdom of God as its rule of life, will live it and express it in its own terms. It cannot accept the expressive means or life style of another culture with which it has little or no affinity. For authenticity it requires that the cultural language used be understood by those who constitute the culture.

Liturgical worship--a consequence of the acceptance of the Gospel--will also employ the living expressive terms of the local culture. It will accept the music of the culture in its totality--as a starting point. In its liturgical praxis, the local community will realise that not all of its musical practices may be equally available for use in its worship. They will realise that in order to celebrate the various rites within the liturgy, the different occasions and liturgical times, selections may have to be made from their cultural experiences so that their faith can be expressed and celebrated in an appropriate manner. The selection process will continue to consider which of their modes of expression, styles of performance, instruments, vestments, are thought of by the local Christian community to be acceptable for their celebrations. Conscious of their membership in and unity with the universal Church and wanting to express this unity, they will also from time to time, as occasion demands, admit other forms and styles of music that are not appropriate to themselves. Of the styles available for this purpose, and apart from liturgical music of neighbouring regions, the one most used is plainchant--a music that had

its origins in the Hebrew-Greek-Roman world of Christianity and has been closely associated with the Christian liturgy ever since.

The Traditional Church in Nigeria should evolve, promote and practice its own characteristic forms of healing and that these should not in any way prejudice the work that is being done in the hospitals, dispensaries and clinics. The tendency and the interest in the spectacle of exorcism and dissociated personality in the normal contexts of healing and prayer over the sick should be discouraged. For the Christian Nigerian, the world must be "alive" in a new sense, not with the self-orientated, personalizing theories of African tradition, but with the knowledge that, "the world is charged with the grandeur of God" and that all natural and human realities are communications of divine love and salvation in Jesus Christ.

For the Church in Nigeria to be able to arrive safely at its self-expression and self hood, thereby enabling its members to worship as Christian Nigerians, it needs saints---men and women, young and old, who are spiritually and intellectually equipped, through sound discipline and healthy inspiration for the work that will come readily to them, while such inspiration is motivated, guided and controlled by their knowledge of the essential truths of Christianity.

NOTES

¹Quoted from W.O. Paulsell "Prayer, Christian" in Keith Grim, R.A. Bullard, and L.D. Schium (eds.) Abingdon Dictionary of Living Religions, (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1981) p. 575.

²John S. Mbiti, Prayers of African Religion (New York: Orbis Books, 1975) p. 1.

³W. Cantwell Smith, The Meaning and End of Religion (New York: Mentor Books, 1964), p. 10.

⁴R.S. Rattray, Ashanti (London: Oxford University Press, 1923; reissued 1969), p. 11.

⁵W. Cantwell Smith in Proceedings of the XIth International Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, 1965 (Leiden: Brill, 1968) I, 58ff.

⁶Smith, The Meaning and End, p. 10.

⁷W.J. Hollenweger, The Pentecostals (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973) p. 372. See also Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971) p. 25 and pp. 29-30.

⁸AACC Bulletin, 11:1 (n.d.) 3.

⁹C.W. Brister, Pastoral Care in the Church (New York: Harper & Row, 1964) p. 11.

¹⁰Ephesians 4:12.

¹¹The function of the laity in the promotion of the Kingdom has already been noted during the establishment of Christianity in Nigeria, in which the most notable workers in reaching out and winning converts into the Church were the lay assistants and evangelists. See Chapter 2, p. 17; also E.A. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1847 - 1914. (London: Layman, 1966) pp. 286-7. Brister says: "While pastoral care is not a first-aid, rescue operation, it is in such a teachable moment that the Christian layman becomes a priest to another." Brister, p. 85.

¹²Earnest E. Bruder, "Having the Courage to Talk", Pastoral Psychology 13 (May 1962) p. 31.

¹³Theodore O. Wedel, The Gospel in a Strange, New World (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963) p. 34. See also page 6, Chapter 5, in the present work.

¹⁴Emile Cailliet, The Christian Approach to Culture (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953) Preface, n.p.

¹⁵Max Warren, The Christian Mission (London: SCM Press, 1951) p. 81.

¹⁶G.C. Oosthuizen, Post Christianity in Africa (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) p. 218.

¹⁷Shoki Coe, "Contextualizing Theology" in Gerald H. Anderson and T.F. Stransky (eds.) Mission Trends No. 3, Third World Theologies, (New York: Paulist Press, 1976) p. 20.

¹⁸William A. Smalley, "Cultural Implications of an Indigenous Church," Practical Anthropology, 5:3 (1958) 56.

¹⁹R. Pierce Beaver, The Christian World Mission (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1958) p. 13.

²⁰William A. Reyburn, "Cultural Implications of an Indigenous Church" Practical Anthropology, 5:3 (1958) 55.

²¹E.C. Parker, "All-Africa Christianity" Christian Liturgy (May 22, 1963) 670.

²²Johannes Hofinger, ed., Liturgy and the Missions: The Nijmegen Papers (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1962) p. 19.

²³Vilmos Vajta, "Theological Basis and Nature of the Liturgy," Lutheran World 6:3 (December 1959) 234.

²⁴Ibid., p. 239.

²⁵Ibid., p. 240.

²⁶Ibid., p. 245.

²⁷John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (London: Heineman, 1969) p. 208.

²⁸E. Bolaji Idowu, Towards an Indigenous Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) p. 48. Also, Benjamin O. Omosebi, "My Theological Perspective on the Ministry of the Church" (A term paper

submitted to Dr. Joseph C. Hough, Jr. for the Course RC301, Fall 1984), p. 20.

²⁹Mbiti, African Religions, p. 66; see also, E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare, (London: Longman, 1962) pp. 113-5.

³⁰Idowu, Olodumare, p. 114.

³¹Cecil Northcott, Christianity in Africa (Naperville, IL: SCM Book Club, 1963) p. 99.

³²Victor E.W. Hayward, ed., African Independent Church Movements (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1963) p. 9.

³³"Morning Prayer: The Second Collect, for Peace" in The Book of Common Prayer with the Additions and Deviations Proposed in 1928 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, n.d.) p. 79 or p. 108.

³⁴See Chapter 2, pp. 38-40 of this work.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 39 of this work.

³⁶C.G. Baeta, ed., Christianity in Tropical Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1968) p. 433.

³⁷Aylward Shorter, African Culture and the Christian Church: An Introduction to Social and Pastoral Anthropology (London: Chapman, 1973) p. 72.

³⁸Ibid., p. 73.

³⁹Geoffrey Parrinder, African Traditional Religion (London, S.P.C.K., 1968) p. 13.

⁴⁰Mbiti, African Religions, p. 10. See also E. Bolaji Idowu, African Traditional Religion (London: SCM Press, 1973) Chapters III and IV.

⁴¹Ayandele, p. 243. See also p. 76.

⁴²J.F. Ade Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria: 1802-1891 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press), 1965) p. 15, also p. 109.

⁴³E. Bolaji Idowu, Towards an Indigenous Church, p. 39.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 40.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ade Ajayi, pp. 174ff. See also Ayandele, pp. 180-1.

⁴⁷Ade Ajayi, p. 176.

⁴⁸Paul Kalanda, "Consolidating Christianity in Africa," Missiology, 4:4 (October 1976) 399.

⁴⁹Idowu, Towards an Indigenous Church, pp. 54-5.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 6.

⁵¹Quoted by Ayandele, p. 222.

⁵²Idowu, Towards an Indigenous Church, p. 49.

⁵³J.C.J. Metford, "St. Luke," in his Dictionary of Christian Lore and Legend (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983) p. 164.

⁵⁴E. Ayo Odukoya, ed., The Church of Nigeria Churchman's Calendar, (Lagos and Port Harcourt: CSS Press, 1983, 1984), 1983, p. 150; 1984 p. 160. Published by the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).

⁵⁵Dawuda Maigari, in "Nigeria (Signs and Wonders Around the World Part II)," in Christian Life Magazine, Signs and Wonders Today (Wheaton, IL: Christian Life Missions, 1983) p. 54.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

THE FUTURE

Concerning the nature and activities of the African Independent Churches, Dr. Edwin Fashole-Luke, of Sierra Leone says:

These churches have innovated adaptation of certain aspects of Christian faith and practice to their African milieu; but though their sermons, ritual practices, hymns, ethical rules, church structures and patterns of ministry abound in Africanisms, most of them lack a coherent and systematic theology. They therefore constitute part of the new material for the building of African Christian theologies.¹

Gotom believes that:

Their strength may be in their seeming weakness. They have used what is traditional and their world view is traditional. Their retention of the indigenous culture may continue to the missionary churches, especially with the growing recognition of each other. Native [African Independent] Church leaders generally are less educated than the missionary churches personnel, but their understanding of the traditional people uneducated in western ways may be greater, and these are in the majority of Nigeria.²

Parrinder correctly estimates one of the greatest weaknesses of the African Independent churches, to being fanatically and ruthlessly opposed to the use of medicine and hospitals; and their ordinary weakness as limited education and "isolation from the main body of Christendom,"³ he however, concedes that:

it is heartening to see that many of the sects have made Christianity their own, so that, with them Christianity is no foreign religion; they have tried to enrich its services and even enliven its faith. The separatists are a large factor in the religious situation in the country, and one would suggest that the orthodox churches might make time for more friendly contact, with the aim of helping them to a greater truth and unity.⁴

If the Traditional churches in Nigeria are genuinely serious about making Christianity relevant and meaningful to their members particularly in their locality and environment, one of the steps they should therefore take is a genuine and serious consultation with their African Independent counterparts. By this the Traditional churches can learn and fully understand the best approach for ministry in Africa. The consultation can and should take many forms, including Dialogue; Visits; Pulpit and personnel exchange and Interfaith activities.

Dialogue.

In their determined effort of discovering a Christ that can really make Nigerian Christians feel at home in their environment, particularly in that vital aspect of their lives, healing and wholeness, the burden of the task heavily rests on the Traditional churches to initiate and organize dialogue with the African Independents. This should be a dialogue that is authentic and true to Christian principles, motivated solely by the serious concern of the love of Christ and His Gospel.

In local churches, it is recommended that a pedagogical relationship be established between the pastor or priest and the congregation. The pastor is supposed to prepare the congregation for the thrust in mission and the congregation should play a supportive role, contributing to the minister's formation. Through dialogue and reflection, the Church of Christ in Nigeria, should be able to produce a type of mission which is contextual and incarnational in character. The Traditional churches in Nigeria are called upon to create structures for meaningful dialogue on mission as well as those for sharing resources in

mission. The churches are called upon to critically and prayerfully examine their missionary priorities and structures in order to formulate more workable structures. They need to assess their relationships to see whether they help to enhance the task which is before them. The Traditional churches in Nigeria, need to examine their commitment to missions in the light of a wider ecumenical context, to see whether they are being faithful to God's word within their own cultural context. Kosuke Koyama observes that

A tragedy of immense proportion takes place when a community of Christians underestimates, ignores and rejects "whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just . . ." of their own community. What kind of tragedy! Theirs is a 'ghetto' existence among their own people.⁵

Mutual Relationship.

In their process of achieving an understanding and working relationship, Nigerian Churches should intensify their mutuality. One of ways in going about this is visitation, others are, Pulpit Exchange; and Interfaith activities.

Visits. Among the Hausa, Hira is a word which describes a kind of leisurely socializing. Hira is understood as the visit of a friend to another with no other motive than the desire to be with the friend. This exercise occurs anytime, with no fixed agenda; no time limitations--often when the day's work is over, or during evening meals. Continuous Hira and friendship by such individuals often develops into mature interpersonal relationships. The initiator of Hira is the person who visits, and he visits because of the love and interest that he has for the other person, or for the work that the other person has for him.

Both the Traditional churches and the African Independent churches in Nigeria, are called upon to initiate and develop some love, interest and mutuality for each other. The church leaders are specifically urged to promote this relationship, first among themselves and then encourage their parishioners to follow suit. By this they teach and educate themselves and their church members that all Christians are the same members of the One and Indivisible Body and not bodies of Christ. (Jn 17:12).

In Hira we find a typical example of the ministry of Christ among humanity. Christ first loved and he initiated the first move (1 Jn 4:19) Christ "emptied himself and was found in "human form" (Phil. 2:4ff). He came to speak and to listen; and His ministry was distinguished by his interest in persons as persons, which meant vulnerability and the possibility of being accepted or rejected.

Through their visits and relationships Nigerian churches in practical terms will demonstrate that they care for one another and for their members as well. They will share and learn from one another the various aspects of ministry, particularly, the healing ministry of the church. The foundation of the caring ministry is embedded in pastoral visitation.⁶ Pastoral calls involves visiting church members not because of an agenda needing to be fulfilled, but because of genuine interest in persons for their own sake. It is in visits that, pastors, elders, staff members, and volunteer workers, can express to the lonely, the socially alienated, the uprooted and those humiliated by poverty, that it is good to be human. A visit to a Nigerian household is not readily interpreted as an invasion of privacy, but as a recognition of the fact that the host is a worthy person.

Pastoral counseling and care could be viewed as assisting the disturbed resolve his or her emotional conflicts. It could also be considered as establishing and maintaining relationships. In the context of counselling, Hira involves listening to the other person and sharing oneself with the person in the act of conversation. Christians of the Traditional and African Independent churches are urged to be

sensitive to each other's needs and feelings, not because of any superficial notion about the "dignity and sanctity of human personality" but out of knowledge of the tragedy of human life, recognizing their common need for love, understanding, and for forgiveness of sins. [Their] sense of belonging . . . is not based simply on similarity of interests or background.

In groups of Christians . . . the members and leaders alike will realize that they live in a community of guilt and acceptance. They are able to love and accept each other because they have known the love and forgiveness of God.⁷

Similarly, the poor in the church neighbourhood need to be sought after and brought into the Christian fold. These group of people have been accustomed to handling their problems in various ways that may be considered abnormal or maladaptive. They know nothing but maladapted existence. The pastor or church worker who may have come from a higher class in the society has to be in touch with his human nature and relate to the poor person on the level of common humanity. It may mean that the counselor may need to get into the world of the poor and social outcast to be able to relate. He should be ready for hesitation and resistance.⁸ The pastoral counselor would discover that in the process of hira, "listening, reflecting feelings and interpretation may prove more effective than the techniques of psychotherapy based on "insight" and "self-awareness."⁹ Ignorance may indicate that the need of the poor is not so much the resolving of inner conflict, but the right

information and advice, adequate support and encouragement. Hira, like pastoral visit or call, may provide another opportunity of knowing people of other tribes or persons outside the church.

The tendency and temptation of ministers to neglect calling on the well-to-do or the elite in the society "because their need may not be great," is ever lurking. The pastor or church worker may feel inferior or inadequate to socialise with such dignitaries because they do not have enough education; or enough sophistication. Such ministers and church personnel need to remember that they are ministers of God and that both the rich and the influential are human beings with physical and spiritual needs, common to human beings and which have to be dealt with, in worst cases by specialists like themselves.

Pastoral visits like hira either on the local church or inter-church, cross-church wise this writer believes will be therapeutically beneficial because it will enable ministers and other participants to recreate, play and forget for some time, their problems, their tight nerve-wrecking schedules and programmes. Hira, like socialising provides a platform for ministers and church personnel to meet and know people in the latter's environment. It also affords an opportunity both for church personnel and members alike in building "a firm foundation for growing relationships."¹⁰

Pulpit Exchange. In pursuance of a proper working relationship and Christian understanding between the Traditional churches and the African Independent churches, leaders of the two main bodies, should endeavour to discard their superiority or inferiority awareness, and in replacement develop some courage, discuss and arrange with their appropriate church departments, the possibility of inviting preachers,

evangelists and other appropriate personalities to take each others pulpit.

Important occasions and normal Sunday services would be good for such an inter-faith pulpit exchange innovation. The innovation could be part of a specially designed week-long healing or deliverance service; or education week. Such programmes should feature regularly in the churches life, and not a one-time affair of the churches.

Ministerial Training and Educational Opportunities. It is common knowledge that one of the weaker areas of the African Independent churches is in the area of trained and training competent scholars and church authorities in Bible and theology.¹¹ Hayward considers it "a fundamental problem for the [African] Independent churches."¹² This is not a good form for an organic institution which exists in a pluralist, fast growing; developing; cultural and materially threatened world like Africa. The Church needs to grow at the same fast pace as the world around it grows. Sound intellectual and spiritual maturity are both hallmarks of the Church¹³ and the one should not be emphasized at the expense of the other.

The Traditional churches in Nigeria and Africa should get their theologies and training institutions properly suited to their specific needs,¹⁴ and invite their African Independent counterparts to share in their resources by assisting in training their qualified or promising leaders and prospective leaders in the areas of Bible and theology.

Christian Councils. Hayward writing in 1963 reports that the various African Independent churches were applying for membership into the Christian Councils.¹⁵ This move and similar ones should be

encouraged by the appropriate department of each Christian community. Such a gesture however should not be initiated for the purpose of attaining distinction or status by the applicant churches.

Others.

The present writer has always observed and officiated in some inter-denominational meetings in Nigeria. One of these gatherings is, the annual Universal Week of Prayer meetings, often formerly organized by the New Life for All (Nigeria) and lately by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). The other popular activity is the Easter eve public procession by all Protestant churches in some areas of Nigeria. Such unifying inter-faith activities should be better organized, participation in them intensified and similar programmes designed, all in a bid of bringing the several churches together, and sharing each others resources, including the ministry of healing. Such moves it is hoped will make the Christian religion meaningful to adherents and non-believers alike, and enhance the promotion of the Kingdom of God to its ultimate realisation on earth.

ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Towards a Theology for Africa.

The recent movement for a relevant Christian theology for Africa which began about thirty years ago is surely not a false outburst nor an endeavour at randomly pursued. From visible and theoretical evidences the movement and the sentiments it preaches are real and purposely genuine. Professor Idowu, in 1965 a Nigerian Methodist Minister (now Patriarch of the Nigerian Methodist Church), wrote:

Is it not sad to say that after one hundred and twenty (and probably considerably more) years of Christianity, the Church in Nigeria has not developed a theology which bears the distinctive stamp of Nigerian thinking or meditation? Theologically, she has been spoonfed by Europeans all along. Her theology is book theology; that is, what she reads in books written by European theologians or what she is told by Europeans is accepted uncritically and given out undigested in preaching or teaching.¹⁶

The learned minister has been followed in a similar spirit and strength by Adrian Hastings, Kwesi Dickson, John Mbiti, Harry Sawyerr, Edward Fashole-Luke, Desmond Tutu, John Pobee, and many other scholars.¹⁷ Other factors seen as responsible for the lag and anomaly expressed about the Church in Africa, existing "without a theology and without a theological concern"¹⁸ seems to be legion. One of these is that the Churches in Africa have not trained enough theologians to meet and address the needs of those that they are supposed to serve within the confines of their cultural and traditional background. Majority of these theologians who were trained in Europe and the West did not seriously aim at relating their newly acquired knowledge to the interpretation of Scriptures and the religious background of the Africans whom they returned home to serve. The Western and European missionaries to Nigeria and Africa approached evangelism in their new fields with the same approach and method used in their own lands. They did not or were not careful enough to realise that they were in a complete different area of the universe where every aspect of life is interwoven with religious beliefs and traditional practices. In their own lands, conversion to Christianity, writes Fashole-Luke, involved the radical, discontinuity with other non-Christian cultures. Applying this principle in Africa, meant disengaging the African converts from what is naturally theirs, and imposing a new mode of life on them in the name of

Christianity. Says the scholar:

In many parts of Africa, this meant breaking away from the African past and adopting a western life style; it therefore became difficult to become a Christian and genuinely remain African.¹⁹

The unwholesome theology practiced in Nigeria but without a proper consideration of the Nigerian cultural, traditional, social and political situation has resulted into two main problems. One is the misunderstanding of the Pauline doctrine of the justification by faith to mean cheap grace.²⁰ The other is the spiritual and moral ambiguous life practiced by some Nigerian Christians. Some of these adherents, were mistakenly led to get what they could out of the Christian Church (social status and material security) and what they thought they could not get from the Christian Church (spiritual reality; and emotional security and wholeness) they sought elsewhere including the traditional religion and secret cults which they had forsaken. Citing an identical problem among the Yoruba, Ojo says:

the people realize that since the forces to be curbed or controlled are innumerable, as many solutions as possible from sources without number would be welcome.²¹

The basis for an African Christian theology is further expressed by Dr. J.K. Agbeti:

It seems to me that it is not religion or Christianity per se that people tend to oppose in Africa but the foreignness of the Christian approach to evangelism and vital national issues. It is the imposition of western culture in the garb of the Gospel that people react against. It is the interpretation of the Bible by the standard of the western social and cultural yardstick, without reference to the indigenous African spiritual heritage and social norms, that stings some African politicians, Christians and theologians.²²

Writing on evolving an African Christian theology, Professor Adrian Hastings provides some guide: ..

The Christian theologian cannot furthermore avoid consideration of not just the character and comparability of beliefs, but also the existential and salvific relationship between the pre-Christian African and the living God of the Bible.²³

He also believes that:

A theology can, must, be black, African, Greek or whatever because to live at all it must be gripping contextualised, enfleshed within the particularisms of the world.²⁴

In formulating and arriving at a relevant Christian theology for Nigeria and Africa, those entrusted with this great responsibility should bear in mind that any true and sound theology is "somehow an amalgam of Bible and human experience"²⁵ and so they must allow the Bible to speak directly to the Nigerians and Africans and not through the interpretations of Western culture.

In relation to this project, I shall confront this issue by dealing mainly with (i) Theological training for both clergy and laity (ii) Church History, (iii) Lectures, Symposia, Debates and other academic endeavours.

Theological Training. Clergy. Bishop Desmond M.B. Tutu of South Africa highlighted one of the paramount facts for the emergence of a truly, relevant Nigerian or African Christian Church when he said: "Theological education in Africa must seek to engage in a dialogue with its own particular context and not that of others."²⁶

Professor Oosthuizen also contend:

If the Church in Africa does not make a drastic change in its theological training, and accept the fact that its greatest immediate challenge is relevance, then it will be even greater instrument in creating post-Christianity than it has been hitherto.²⁷

The above (which bears in mind the preparation of both the clergy and the laity with equal importance) strongly suggests the course and main thrust at which the emphasis on theological training in Nigeria and Africa should be directed. In citing examples the present writer hopes to provide means by which the above advice could be effectively implemented.

Techniques in Sermons therefore should include a strong and regular emphasis on the spiritual opportunities of the Christian life and of the scriptures rather than over-stuffing the already morally conscious Nigerian or African with moralising theology. Many sufferers and victims of despair do not readily approach the pastor for help, because owing to the highly charged moralistic atmosphere, these people assume that they are a disappointment to the society and the pastor, hence the latter is the last person they would approach. This line of action the sufferers take when it is often too late.

The western missionary and the Nigerian priest have not often taken the spirit infested world view of the traditional individual seriously enough. A sufferer who feels actually bewitched is very conscious that he or she would receive nothing but basically a homily against the belief in and the fear of evil spirits and witchcraft. The Nigerian clergy; instructors and ordinands, also the laity should constantly realise that the doctrine of the presence of the Holy Spirit serves as a source of strength to many Christians and helps immunize them against the fear of evil spirits and witches. For people who hold the biblical world view seriously and believe in God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the angels and the ministering Spirits, there is always a

stronghold (refuge) in times of emotional stress. Those Nigerians who still believe in and dread the traditional spirit world are often wont to see their emotional stress and physical sickness in terms of witches and evil spirits. It is not therefore easy for the individual to dismiss the traditional world of evil spirits and witches, because the belief is reinforced by the significant members of the society.

Nigerian seminaries, theological institutions; their neophytes and clergy at in-service programmes should be taught and reminded that the new teaching which the Bible and especially the New Testament have added to the traditional belief is the belief in a powerful Satan who popularly seems to rank on the same level with God, because he is often said to oppose God's work. In the traditional belief, the chief of demons, (esu in Yoruba) does not rank high as the Deity. Another new belief which differs from the traditional is the expectation of a future life of bliss with the return of Jesus Christ. This seems to be a revolutionary change in the traditional concept of time. In Nigerian traditional belief, this life is the zenith, (though there is another life) and the departed are reincarnated into their surviving family members.

Techniques in Praying for the Sick and Exorcism. While the Western and European missionaries in Nigeria and Africa reduce the belief in the existence of evil spirits and witches to the point of denying it, the African Independent churches we have earlier observed accept their presence as real.²⁸ Like the apostle Paul they would see life as a battle against principalities and powers and the "Spiritual hosts of wickedness."²⁹ Evil, the Nigerian seminarians, and church workers should be taught, is not an occasional event but a reality which

deserves attention within the world, since it disturbs the harmony of life including societal and communal relations. Sufferers and victims who are Christians should not consult the diviners, the spirit of the ancestors, and the divinities for deliverance, instead these people should be taught to believe that God has given to His children (Christians) the means and power to be protected against evil attacks through His Son, (Jesus Christ), the angels and the Holy Spirit. Scriptural verses could be provided to the clients for their comfort, meditation and assurance of God's abiding presence. Such scriptural verses abound. Some of them include: Psalm 34:4; Matt. 10:28; 11:28-9; II Tim. 1:7; Heb. 4:14-15; 13:5-6.

The belief in the involvement of evil spirits is so common in every misfortune that every disease and misfortune is perceived as part of the general concerted effort of Satan and its hosts to frustrate the work of God. This belief makes members of the African Independent churches active in visiting and praying for the sick in hospitals or at home. Similarly members of Traditional churches consisting of the priest, the healing ministry personnel and volunteers (trained or formerly untrained) could offer prayers for the sick at the church or in the patient's home or hospital. In situations of serious mental disturbance, prayers may be continued throughout the night. The sick may be anointed with oil (consecrated by the priest or bishop). The laying on of hands may be practiced on the ill person³⁰ and church members should be encouraged to live a life of prayer.

The Counselor in Nigeria for example, will be a member of the community or someone who has a proper practical and theoretical knowledge of the area of the origin of the client. If the specialist is

an indigene of the client's place of origin or abode he is expected to have personally or theoretically passed through the major initiation rites of that society. He or she must have been exposed into the very secret principles of the spirit governing the society and its people. The counselor must be a baptized member of the church and should be aware of the fact of his or her salvation and justification in spite of himself or herself.

The counselor in a Nigerian community, seminarians and other church workers, needs to be a "societary" person, someone who is aware of and who can easily identify himself/herself with the goals and aspirations of the society and culture of his working area. Hence the specialist is not only able to understand the language of socialization but is also able to hear and understand the language of the sick souls of that particular culture. The effective counselor in the Nigerian society is essentially a human being who is fully involved in the complexities of a vibrant, evolving organism--the universe. Being so involved in the joys, strivings, and failures of the society, the counselor is not condemning or convicting but accepting.

The counselor (aríran = Yoruba) like the seer of old³¹ is a representative of God.³² Convinced therefore that the task is God's the counselor would approach his/her responsibilities with trust in the power of God, and with freedom from worry and over concern, remembering that the task is not "his private affair" but "the ministry of Christ."³³ Like Jesus Christ, who bore the image of God in his person, the counselor is dependent on the leading of the Holy Spirit in whose power he or she operates. The specialist should always bear in mind that he/she is the bearer of God's love to all humanity in and outside

the community of the people of God (the Church).

The resources of Christian Theology and Church Life is another area in which the Nigerian and African seminaries and theological institutions should seriously consider, as authorities plan the curriculum in training the right men and women for their respective mission fields. In this area Oosthuizen refers to Sundkler who speaks about "the search for an integrated curriculum."³⁴

The traditional outlook and world view of the Nigerian or African is closer to that of the Hebrew Old Testament and the Jewish lifestyle of the New Testament gospels than the world view of the western peoples.³⁵ The Old Testament literature (with the exception of the futuristic apocalyptic literature) and those New Testament writings addressed to a Jewish audience more readily reach the soul of the Nigerian than the Pauline writings addressed to the Greek world. The doctrine of God, the archangels and God's ministering spirits fit in well into the previous framework of the traditional Nigerian world view. God is served by the angels who, like the nature divinities, carry out His orders. The belief that some of the angels protect the believers against the evils of life is a powerful source of spiritual strength to the indigenous Christian. These are direct relevant ideas for the typical Nigerian, and they are what the ministering servants of God should know to be able to apply in their diverse ministries.

The world of the Bible is as infested with evil spirits and powers as it is in the traditional world view. The place and work of Jesus Christ in the Gospels appeals to the indigenous Christian. Christ's healing of the sick and the casting away of evil spirits (exorcism) is what the traditional Nigerian has been longing for. His

(Jesus') method of identifying and curing the victim of spirit-possession is very similar to the technique used by traditional diviner and medicine men. The word power of Jesus Christ is another resource with which the traditional healers are in some measure endowed. The general picture of Christ as the gentle friend of the common people and the oppressed is attractive in a culture and society that is infested with oppressive and unjust behaviours. Christ's death and resurrection, appearance to the closest of his disciples, and his final ascension are not strange concepts among many tribes. The belief that some people who die untimely deaths may continue to live normal life in different Nigerian and African societies is common. The resurrected and ascended Jesus takes the place of the ancestor in the "new clan"--the Church.

These points and areas of contact between pre-Christian (traditional) ideas and Christian ideas are very valuable themes in transmitting the principles and the reality of the Gospel to the Nigerian peoples. The seminarian and church workers need to be knowledgeable in these facts and the theological colleges and other ministerial training institutions are one of the proper places to learn them. Oosthuizen's observation that "the study in Africa of the Biblical languages will make the whole theological training much easier"³⁶ is very important in this regard and more efforts should be geared in implementing the idea.

Laity. The relevance of the laity in the life and ministry of the church universal, indeed in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. This point has already been discussed.³⁷ We may however add that the World Council of Churches also believes that:

Any emphasis on the ministry of the laity means not only training but a special kind of pastoral care. Laymen and women should be encouraged to use the pastoral gifts that many of them possess. Mutual care of members by each other as well as by the clergy is needed in the Church. Christians have many natural opportunities for the pastoral care of neighbors, workmates and others.³⁸

An effective healing ministry could be a reality in the Nigerian Traditional churches by combining the clergy's and other ministers effort with cheerful and well trained individuals and groups of the laity. These church volunteers could help in individual and group counseling needs of the churches. The necessity for using these workers in addition to the priests effort should again not to be construed as an attempt in displacing or usurping the trained pastor and his or her assisting staff³⁹ in their caring ministry; but the idea should be viewed in its proper perspective; trying to reach more people and in a more effective way. Furthermore:

Enabling lay people in the caring ministry of the church involves far more than "getting a few people to help the minister with calling." . . . lay pastoral care manifests the very nature and foundation of the church as a caring community with its common priesthood of all believers. It provides a place in the life and ministry of the church for those who hear and believe, and want to put their faith into practice in a visible, tangible way.⁴⁰

A true witnessing church cannot effectively function without its two forms--clergy and laity--, working side by side and in a more balanced way. The one--clergy should not be emphasized at the expense of the other--laity. The lay apostolate (ministry) of the Traditional churches in Nigeria should therefore be well-organized, and incorporated into their life and their various training departments.

Church History. From a more careful observation and study, Church history as important and as vital as it is, is yet to occupy and

assume its proper place in the lives of Nigerian Christians and also in the curriculum of its country's seminaries and theological institutions.⁴¹ This deficiency in itself amounts to a great disease in the Church of Christ in Nigeria. For apart from the benefit of acquiring knowledge, there is the added feeling of self-pride, identity and belonging which the knowledge of the history of a person's place or origin or institution affords and gives to the individual.

Owing to the lack of the historical knowledge of Christianity in Nigeria and Africa, Christians in these areas do not actually realise that they have been dealing with a phenomenon that is actually indigenous to their culture (if it is properly handled). From all indications, Nigerians as well as Africans all have every legitimate reasons to take pride in and be identified with the Christian religion. This is because Christianity itself has been in one form or another in Africa, since the early days of its existence and Africans have in various ways been actively involved in it including its spread.⁴² It is the candid opinion of the present writer that for the African, the knowledge and proper understanding of its own religious past is very essential to its present and future. From here the Church can proceed in formulating creating and contributing its own quota and insights towards the spread of Christianity. Nigerian Christians will themselves be able to see their churches as a place properly suited to feel at home.⁴³

When Church history takes its proper place in Nigerian churches, seminaries and theological institutions, the dichotomised, ambivalent and confused indoctrination existing in the minds of the people regarding the nature of Christianity will undoubtedly be amended.

Priests, churchworkers and members alike will for example realise that to think or talk about the healing ministry of the Church as one of its proper activities and functions is to repeat the obvious. This is because from the ministry of Christ Himself down through the era of the early Church, to Europe and the West from where contemporary traditional Christianity came to Nigeria and Africa, healing has always featured very regularly and vigorously in the Church. Discussing the historical forms and functions of healing in the Church, William Clebsch and Charles Jackel wrote:

Healing as restoration and advance has always been an important function of the ministry of the cure of souls. Its history is continuous and rich in diversity and range. At various times the Church has emphasized first one and then another aspect of the healing ministry, using a variety of instrumentalities and methods.⁴⁴

In implementing the directive of incorporating the serious study of Church history in the curriculum of Nigerian seminaries and theological institutions, Oosthuizen urges that this discipline (Church History)

should not be studied from a distance, so that the impression is created that all the major events in Church history took place somewhere else, especially in Europe; it should be taught in such a way that only are theological developments seen within the Church, but that, as far as Africa is concerned, the dynamic of the growth of the Church is seen on the African continent.⁴⁵

C.G. Baeta in the introductory review of the international African Seminar held in Ghana in 1965, suggests that:

The story of the Christian influence in Africa should consider not only the effects of evangelization on a people but also those of the people and their religion on the character and growth of the Christian communities which come into being among them.⁴⁶

The writing and publishing of well written Church history text books and materials for Nigerians and Africans, with their historical tradition and culture in mind should be encouraged and embarked upon. Such materials should include the study and discussion of important personalities in the life and place of the Nigerian Church with an intent of informing, inspiring and encouraging succeeding generations of Nigerians to emulate their good examples.⁴⁷

Lectures, Symposia, Debates, Symposia, Debates on Theological Issues. Theology in any context and at any time presupposes God's self-revelation, for God makes himself known to man. Yet divine revelation through the Word of God anticipates consequences in human experience.⁴⁸ Each doctrine evolving out of biblical revelation and historic Christian interpretation has its parallel in human experience. As the clergy, church workers, and the laity, from the local and broader spectrum of the Christian church engage in dialogue, lectures, symposia, debates and other literary exercises, they will discover mistaken views of the Deity, of sin, of the Incarnation, or guilt and forgiveness in the pastoral endeavours of the Church, including the healing ministry. It is not uncommon to find an instance, when a church member amazes his or her priest with the member's quiet wisdom and insight about the church's mission, some aspect of family life or the daily providence of God. Hence we realise that our knowledge of God develops both from biblical study and from personal experience.

To theologize, to frame a theology, is every Christian's privilege and obligation. Each Christian is expected to articulate his or her own faith reverently before the Deity.⁴⁹ Biblical truth does not

change. An individual's perception and understanding of the Deity, the universe, and his or her own existence before the Deity however changes. The Deity himself is the absolute truth rather than a person's statements about the Deity in the form of theological propositions. Every Christian minister, theologian or scholar, has both a practical and theological vocation. The minister must know the standpoint from where he or she speaks and possess a "ready answer" for the hope resident in his heart.⁵⁰ A corresponding responsibility rests upon each community of believers--the church--to reflect upon its faith, life, and ministry, and to articulate the content of its faith to those in the world. In the process of these literary exercises of debates, symposia, lectures, participants and spectators alike would realise that the Deity transcends and judges people's partial knowledge and all religious systems. People should also realise that through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the Deity desires to lead believers continually into all truth.⁵¹

In pursuit of a relevant Christian theology for the Nigerian and the African Church, lectures, debates, symposia and similar literary exercises on theology should be well organised and their findings conscientiously implemented. While the writer will be suggesting themes and topics for the literary exercises being advocated; he wishes to remind readers that the actual exercise of discussing or debating the topics suggested are not within the expectations of this work. The themes or topics suggested in formulating and adopting a relevant Christian theology for the Nigerian and African Church (though not in any preferential order) are:

- (a) The Development of an African Liturgy.
- (b) The Development of African Translations of Scripture, and Literature, African Forms of Worship and Administration.

Regarding worship, the writer was lately informed that a new liturgy for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist for the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has been formulated, published and already put into use. A new Anglican Prayer Book was also said to have been launched on December 3, 1983, at Onitsha, Nigeria.⁵²

- (c) The Therapeutic Functions of Worship and Liturgy.
- (d) What is the Relation of the Living and the Dead in Nigerian or African Society?

Since family ties are so important in African societies, it might be worth while for the Church in the different parts of the continent to concern itself more and more with the family and the Church as the Great Family. The question could also be debated or discussed:

What are the implications of African tribal affiliations for the Nigerian or the African Church?

What is the relationship between Church and Culture?

- (e) Can There Be an African Christian Theology?
Is There One? If So, What Are It's Characteristics? Where are we to Look for it Today?
- (f) African Christian Philosophy and Practice.
- (g) The Development of African Theology.
- (h) Should There Be an African Christian Theology or African Christian Theologies?

The above subject may be appropriate for discussion, debate or suitable as a lecture title, considering some the diversified,

dissimilar and varied nature of the religion and some religious ideas, rituals, and practices of some areas in Nigeria, and the respective areas of the African continent. The question and the point just raised also bears in mind that one of the main tasks of the theologian or evangelist is to relate the Christian Gospel to each people's particular social, cultural and political milieu.

The above list is not exhaustive. Other ideas, and subjects could be added as the Nigerian or African Christian experience advances.⁵³

Further Research in Other Aspects of the Church's Life.

Some of the topics suggested in the earlier section, above could be considered for study in this area and vice-versa. The issues outlined here are not in any order of priority and because of the guidelines of this project, the writer will not be debating or doing the research suggested at the moment.

The Adaptation of the Social and Cultural Values of African Traditional Rites of Initiation in the Christian Church. Such values would include Naming Ceremonies,⁵⁴ Initiation Rites; Betrothal, Wedding and Marriage Ceremonies; Death and Burial; Existing Christian rites should also be studied in a bid to making these and the faith more meaningful to the Nigerian as well as the African Christian. Such rites include Baptism, Confirmation, Dedication and Acceptance into Church Membership. Others are Ordination, Installation and Collation of Church workers; Anointing and Burial, including wake-keeping and memorial services.

Marriage and Family Counseling. Issues to be explored here will include, Preventive Marriage Counseling; Premarital Counseling; Marriage renewal and reconciliation; Marriage Enrichment groups; Polygamous marriages; Monogamous marriages.

The Promotion and Exposure of Nigerian Young People into Counselling Opportunities and Programmes. People say: "A stitch in time saves nine." When young people are shown the way to getting their problems solved, like counseling they will obviously grow to approach such specialists including ministers when they are troubled and will not become liabilities or social threat to the society, and danger to themselves.⁵⁵

Referral counseling in the Art of Pastoral Care in the Nigerian or African context.⁵⁶

The Place of Confession, Prayer and Exorcism of the Spirit-Possessed in the Nigerian Church. What importance and significance do these acts have on therapeutic healing?

The Relationship of the Priest as a Spiritual Helper on One Hand and that of the Medical Practitioner as the Administrator of the Medical Treatment on the Other, in the Case of a Sick Nigerian Individual.

African Christian Feminist Theology. The study of the above will include the function and place of women in the Church; in Church societies in relation to the socio-cultural practice in Nigeria and the entire continent.⁵⁷

Which Traditional Forms (for example, in liturgy) Do Have Spiritual Significance and Which Do Not?

What Are The Essentials in Worship Service and What is Accessory or Accidental?

What Does The Worship Service Imply in the Nigerian or African Christian Context?

What is the Double Function of the Priest Speaking to the People on Behalf of God and Speaking to God on Behalf of the People?

How can the Nigerian or the African interpret the Gospel in Terms of His or Her Own Symbols and With that Person's Own Poetry and Song In Order To Arrive At a Proper Indigenization and a Real Expression of the Christian Faith? The list of subjects for research seems unending.

This writer also strongly believes that Christian ethical values have a great deal to learn from the healthy aspects of Nigerian or African attitudes towards suffering, wholeness and healing. There is a great deal of truth in the Nigerian understanding of unmerited suffering of some individuals resulting partly from broken harmony between a person, nature and the spirit realities of existence, which needs a kind of 'appeasement and atonement.' Some examples are the pain of poverty, unemployment and discrimination. Such situation disturbs the natural harmony between the Deity's various orders of creation and "atonement" is essential in the form of "sacrificial" redistribution of resources, power structures and the re-education of the people as to the right

attitude and approach of accepting human beings as human beings and not as high and low, great and small, learned and ignorant.

A good deal of the teaching on Christian social ethics, and the approach to the demands of redistribution of resources in this age of technology, when the rich are getting richer and the poor, poorer in Nigeria, and some other parts of Africa, requires new insights from this approach to suffering resulting partly from broken harmony. Also, in the Nigerian context of wholeness, a person suffering whether "meritedly" or "unmeritedly," relied on the fellowship of relatives, neighbours, and kinsmen, the departed ancestors, for moral and practical support for healing; and recovery to wholeness. The Christian Church in Nigeria, bearing in mind the African philosophy: "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am,"⁵⁸ should endeavour to adopt and adapt this in recreating a real community consciousness in which fellow believers provide to the sick, to the suffering; and to the less fortunate, the kind of emotional, cognitive and actional involvement the traditional society would have offered as a psychotherapeutic or support group.

SUMMARY

The Nigerian, African Independent churches' and the Traditional churches, in recognition of their inadequacies and poverty should work together in their endeavour for relevance in the Christian faith. Also important would be the experience of the guidance of the Church brought about by thanksgiving and thought, question and answer, a guidance which would not evade the problems for which both the world and the church cannot find answers.

The Church in Nigeria and Africa cannot afford to continue without its own theology, in the face of so many current theological challenges. The theology for the Nigerian Church must be developed as it teaches and practices its Faith and in response to the complex situations in which it exists. A relevant Nigerian or African Christian theology in relation to the present, must appreciate the processes of the evolution of the Nigerian or African, and therefore make the corpus of the past relevant to the situation of the present day. With regards to the future, an African Christian theology must be caught up within the dynamism of the Christ Event moving towards a complete future manifestation, fulfilling and at the same time transcending the dynamism of the life of the Nigerian or African. It should be a theology willing and ready to reform and adjust itself--the theology of the pilgrim. No matter how many,--one or more,--the Nigerian or African Christian theology should be the type that expresses the theology of the Universal Church.

NOTES

¹ Edward W. Fashole-Luke, "The Quest for African Christian Theologies," Scottish Journal of Theology, 24:2 (April 1976) 171.

² Musa Dimka Gotom, "Towards an Indigenous Model for Pastoral Counseling and Care" (Ph.D., School of Theology at Claremont, June 1975) p. 207.

³ Geoffrey Parrinder, Religion in an African City (London: Oxford University Press, 1953) p. 131.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 131-2.

⁵ Kasuke Koyama, Waterbuffalo Theology (London: SCM Press, 1974) p. 45.

⁶ C.W. Brister, Pastoral Care in the Church (New York: Harper & Rowe, 1964) pp. 149-53.

⁷ Margaret E. Kuhn, You Can't Be Human Alone: Handbook on Group Procedures for the Local Church (New York: National Council of Churches in the USA, 1956) pp. 3-4.

⁸ Charles F. Kemp, Pastoral Care With the Poor (New York: Abingdon Press, 1972) p. 65.

⁹ Ibid., p. 68, and Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966) p. 152.

¹⁰ Gotom, p. 271; also Victor E.W. Hayward, ed., African Independent Church Movements (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1963) p. 31.

¹¹ Gotom, p. 207; also Fashole-Luke, p. 175.

¹² Hayward, p. 32.

¹³ Parrinder, p. 131.

¹⁴ See Chapter 5, pp. 158-163 of this work.

¹⁵ Hayward, p. 32.

¹⁶ E. Bolaji Idowu, Towards an Indigenous Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) pp. 22-3.

¹⁷For the words of these scholars and writers on this particular subject, see Adrian Hastings, "On African Theology" in Scottish Journal of Theology, 37:3 (1984) 359-374 the footnotes inclusive.

¹⁸Fashole-Luke, p. 159.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 160.

²⁰John C. Messenger, "The Christian Concept of Forgiveness and Anang Morality" in W.A. Smalley (ed.) Readings in Missionary Anthropology (Tarrytown, NY: Practical Anthropology, 1967) p. 184.

²¹G.J. Afolabi Ojo, Yoruba Culture (London: University of London Press, 1966) p. 188.

²²J.K. Agbeti, "African Theology: What it is," Presence, 5:3 (1972) 2.

²³Hastings, p. 366.

²⁴Ibid., p. 374.

²⁵Ibid., p. 373.

²⁶D.M.B. Tutu, "Whither Theological Education?: An African Perspective," Theological Education, 9:4 (Summer 1973) 27.

²⁷G.C. Oosthuizen, Post-Christianity in Africa (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) p. 255.

²⁸See Chapter IV, p. 113 of this work.

²⁹Ephesians 6:12.

³⁰Mark 16:15-18.

³¹I Samuel 9:9.

³²Wayne E. Oates, The Christian Pastor (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954) p. 46ff. Ariran is the Yoruba name for "seer" akin to the prophet Samuel's days. (See Note 31, above). Ariran is also a diviner prophet with clairvoyant abilities.

³³Carrol A. Wise, The Meaning of Pastoral Care (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) p. 7.

³⁴Oosthuizen, p. 259.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷See Chapter V, pp. 8-10 of this work.

³⁸From the Report of the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches in The Evaston Report (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955) p. 170.

³⁹Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources For the Ministry of Healing and Growth (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984) p. 396.

⁴⁰Diane Detwiler-Zapp and William Caveness Dixon, Lay Caregiving (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982) p. 5.

⁴¹Oosthuizen, p. 260.

⁴²See Chapter II, p. 10 of this work. Also L. Nya Kwiawon Taryor, "Impact of the African Tradition on Christianity in Africa Through the Independent Church Movements" (D. Min., School of Theology at Claremont, June, 1976) pp. 30ff.

⁴³F.B. Welbourn and B.A. Ogot, A Place to Feel at Home (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) p. 132ff.

⁴⁴William R. Clebsch and Charles R. Jackle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964) p. 34.

⁴⁵Oosthuizen, p. 260. Cp. Terence Ranger, "Medical Science and Pentecost: The Dilemma of Anglicanism" in W.J. Scheils (ed.) The Church and Healing (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982) p. 344

⁴⁶C.G. Baeta, Christianity in Tropical Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1968) p. 6.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁸John Baillie, The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956) pp. 83-5.

⁴⁹Romans 1:12; I Peter 2:9.

⁵⁰I Peter 3:15.

⁵¹John 16:13.

⁵²Personal correspondence dated 3rd December, 1983 from Mr. Francis P. Agari, an ordinand at St. Francis of Assisi, Theological College, Wusase, Zaria.

⁵³Benjamin O. Qmōṣebi, "My Theological Perspective on the Ministry of the Church" (a term paper submitted to Dr. Joseph C. Hough, Jr., for course RC 301, Fall, 1984) pp. 20-1

⁵⁴Cp. Luke 1:59; 2:21; see also Geoffrey Parrinder, West African Religion (London: Epworth Press, 1969) p. 192.

⁵⁵"The Church and Family Change," Nigerian Christian 9:4 (April 1975) 10.

⁵⁶Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling p. 310ff. Also Virgo Leslie, "First Aid in Pastoral Care: VII Skills of Pastoral Care," Expository Times, 96:1 (October 1984) 9.

⁵⁷E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare (London: Longman, 1962) pp. 137-9; also Richard N. Ostling and James Shepherd, "Breaking Up the Men's Club: The Church of England Moves Toward Ordaining Women Priests," Time 124:22, (November 26, 1984) 92-3.

⁵⁸John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (London: Heinemann, 1969) p. 127.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

The Problem Restated.

If Christianity which is known to be a truly salvific religion is to be meaningful, beneficial and practicable to Nigerians as well as Africans, particularly in the peoples own lands, it must be able to address the adherents' numerous and ever-pressing needs. It is the observation and therefore the contention of the writer that the Christian religion in contemporary Nigeria as it is practiced in some Churches, namely the Traditional (European and Western parented) Churches has not been able to provide believers the much desired opportunities of spiritual and physical well-being which characterises it.

The healing ministry--dispensed through prayer, medicine, pastoral counseling, group therapy, nutrition and mental health services, rehabilitation from drug and alcoholic problems, social reconciliation and the protection of fundamental human rights,--is indeed an essential and important responsibility of the Church to the people. Sadly enough the Traditional Churches in Nigeria have neglected to discharge this responsibility adequately. Factors adduced for the minimal attention has been to some extent historical and partly ignorance of the pioneering evangelists and propagators of the religion in Nigeria and Africa. Owing to the agelong neglect, the healing

ministry of the Church to some Nigerian Christians is being thought of as an art foreign and outside the religion which they practice, but which rests in the domain of other Christians, namely members of the African Independent (or Aladura) Churches.

Summary of Chapters II-VI.

Chapter II of this project specifically dealt with the origin and the activities of the early Christian Missions in Nigeria. This was an enterprise solely organised by the European and Western missionaries, and their efforts though quite laudable and indelible, were considered incomplete as they could not properly address the indigenous socio-cultural and traditional issues which emanated during the course of their ministries. One of the consequences of this failure is the inability to cater for the spiritual and physical wholeness of the indigenous converts.

In Chapter III I have provided a documented report on my research regarding the art of healing in Nigerian traditional culture and my findings are that there are abundant forms and practices which are quite similar and which are also adaptable to the Christian religion for the benefit of the Nigerian as well as the African Christians. Some of these indigenous forms include the identification of the cause of illness and sickness, the agents of healing and the procedures for healing.

Chapter IV was devoted to the model of the project--the African Independent Churches--. This group of Christian communities were studied and examined in the light of the healing ministry of the Christian Church with a particular reference to the cultural,

traditional, social and economic contexts in which they exist. Because these churches do adopt and utilize the indigenous cultural and traditional forms conformable to the Christian religion in their practices, especially healing, they are seen to be winning more converts including members of the Traditional Churches to their quarters.

In Chapter V, strategies and methods are offered to the Traditional Churches on how they could implement in an effective manner, the insights and knowledge gained both from their African Independent counterparts and from their denominational experience on the vital issue of healing in the Nigerian Church. Chapter VI reflected on the earlier sections of the project dealing with the issues of the healing ministry in the Church in Nigeria. In this Chapter, the writer further suggests that a proper mutual relationship and constructive dialogue engaged both by the African Independent Churches and the Traditional Churches will be very helpful in promoting this essential aspect of the Gospel among its adherents. Contemplating the present and the future state of the Church in Nigeria, with regards the subject of healing and other vital issues, a review of the current theology and a formulation of an adequate, relevant Christian theology is being advocated as necessary.

CONCLUSION

The Christian Church in Nigeria as well as in Africa is being called upon to a renewed dimension of ministry. It is being called upon to self-recognition and self-consciousness.

The Church in this part of the world is being reminded that if the faith which it professes must be meaningful and relevant to those which it exists to serve its various ministries must relate to these

people as human beings with specific needs and identifiable characteristics.

Healing is a central function of the Christian Faith. Jesus Christ considered healing as one of the His major vocational responsibilities, and no threat or obstacles were able to deter Him from dispensing with this important aspect of his mission.

The Saviour has not only portrayed Himself as a model for ministry, he has also instructed and commissioned the Church Universal including the Traditional churches in Nigeria to continue with this important task. The burden of obeying the orders in all its ramifications therefore rests with the Nigerian Church.

The Church in Nigeria is reminded that it should constantly be aware of the mental and emotional unease that change has inflicted upon the society. It needs to realise that it is the halfway house needed by the uprooted men and women who cannot cope with life. The Traditional churches in Nigeria should learn from the African Independent churches that the Christian Church has a responsibility to incorporate and integrate as much that is traditional and familiar as much as possible in a pattern of socialization in order to make its members feel at home.

The task of this project has been approached as a response to the challenge posed by the healing ministry to the Traditional Churches in Nigeria. The work is also being carried out as an eye-opener to many other issues and subjects needing attention in the Nigerian Church. It is hoped that the subject of healing being dealt with and other relevant issues raised will be faithfully pursued.

It is similarly the belief and hope of the writer that the time and energy expended on this project will inspire concerned readers into

positive thinking and positive witness (action).

Since the victim of disease is never alone in his plight, the same corporate effort would be required to drive away the 'demon' that threatens and disturbs the individual harmony and the relationship of the community.

Christians are the object of another's concern. The Incarnation reminds us that acceptance of love from another releases a person from his or her lonely bondage. Giving and receiving establishes a community in which there is the acceptance of mutual trust and dependence. Every member of the Church as a believer is therefore urged to play his or her due role in ensuring that the healing ministry of the Church takes its proper place in Nigeria.

African Independent churches present to the Nigerian Traditional churches a new method of worship and approach to the ministry of healing.

This study reveals some valuable cultural insight into their practice. The Nigerian theologian of the Traditional church is challenged and assigned a big task to formulate and implement a proposal which goes beyond his or her own position and beyond the position of the 'model' churches--the African Independent churches. This project has adopted this methodology with respect to the subject of healing. The African Independent Churches' challenge though rarely articulated as a theological system, should enable Nigerian Christians in the never-ending process of doing their theology and of leading their churches. It is indeed a gargantuan task.

The tasks of implementing the strategies of the healing ministry and that of making the Christian faith a relevant affair to men and

women, young and old in the Nigerian Church are quite evident and overwhelming. The labourers are not in copious supply, nor is their strength. Yet the opportunity for evangelism and mission in Nigeria cannot be greater than it is at the current period.

But as a people who rely on God for guidance; strength and support, Nigerian Christians can go forth into the tasks fully aware that it will be accomplished not only by their strength, but more importantly by God's own Spirit as the Deity has promised: "fear not, for I am with you . . . I will strengthen you, I will help you." Isaiah 41:10.

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